

INSIDE

JUNIOR CHANDAMAMA

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PULLOUT FOR TINY TOTS

June 2002 Rs. 15/-



CHANDAMAMA

Inside

Vasudha

A 16-page supplement

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for India

TRAVELLERS
TO INDIA - 2
(Page 5)

S. S. S. S. S.



ON THE SCENTED TRAIL

Chandana is looking for adventure. Leaving her family holidaying at Coorg, she treks off into the nearby forest in search of fun and excitement. She doesn't know that she is in a sandalwood forest - till a sandalwood tree begins speaking to her.

Did you know the sandalwood, whose Latin name is *Santalum Album*, grows largely in the States of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu? Some important sandal producing places in Karnataka are Dharwad, Shimoga, Chikmagalur, Mercara, Mysore, and Bangalore.

Do you know I've been grown in India for the past 25 centuries? In the kingdom of Mysore, during the times of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, sandalwood had been declared a property of the state.

Oops! That makes you a special tree!



A



B



C



D



E

DO YOU KNOW WHY THE SANDALWOOD TREE IS SO SPECIAL? SIMPLE! BECAUSE IT'S VERY USEFUL TO US. SOME OF THE USES OF SANDALWOOD HAVE BEEN ILLUSTRATED HERE. CAN YOU IDENTIFY THEM?

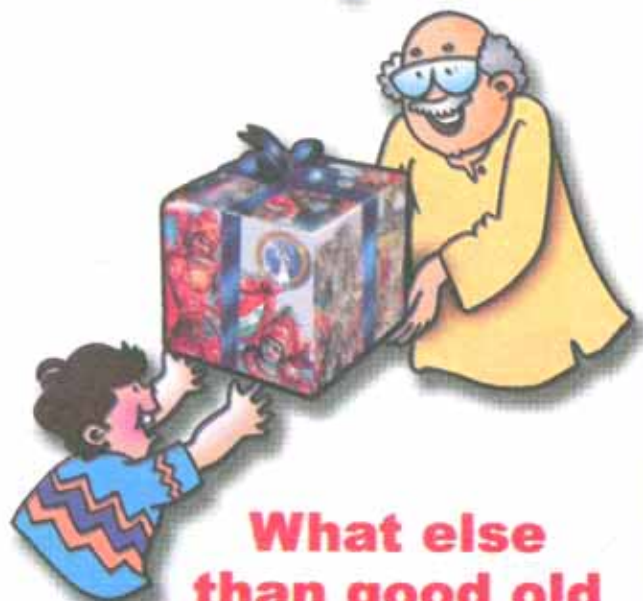
Answer : A - in making soaps, B - sandal paste as medicine, C - in perfumes, D - for worship, E - sandalwood carving



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CHANDAMAMA INDIA LIMITED

No.82 Defence Officers' Colony

Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097

Phone : 234 7384 / 234 7399

E-mail : chandamama@vsnl.com



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Plus

**JUVENILE
CHANDAMAMA**

Who destroys, who protects Earth?

Mother Earth has several names, the most popular of them being Prithvi. Do you know how this name came into being?

Time was when the people of the earth were happy. They tilled the soil and produced different crops. They also performed Yajnas to express their gratitude to the divinities who gave them rains and presided over different seasons. Bad times came when a tyrant ruled the earth. He declared that he was the god and the people should make their offerings to him alone. The sages tried to arouse good sense in him, but in vain. So, in anger they destroyed him. In the absence of a ruler, there was chaos all over the earth. The people had none to obey.

There was no rain, and no crop. Famine followed. However, in response to prayers from the sages, a great prince appeared on the scene. He faulted Mother Earth for neglecting her children. She explained that the people themselves were to blame for their plight. The prince now took the lead in caring for Nature and the people followed him. The prince was Prithu, and the earth came to be known as Prithvi.

In the present times, we do not have to look far for tyrants who destroy Nature. Nobody else but ourselves. Let us not wait for another Prince Prithu to be born. Each of us can be a Protector of Mother Earth. How? This is answered in our supplement VASUDHA in this issue. It coincides with World Environment Day on June 5.

Editorial Advisors : RUSKIN BOND, MANOJ DAS **Consultant Editor :** K. RAMAKRISHNAN

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Founded by

**B. Nagi Reddi
and
Chakrapani**

Editor

Viswam

COVER STORY

Travellers to India-2

To the Portuguese traveller Vasco da Gama goes the credit of discovering the sea route to India. He landed in

Calicut on the Kerala coast in May 1498, after a perilous sea voyage across half the world.

Da Gama came from an illustrious Portuguese family. He served in the fleet of King Manuel of Portugal and earned a name as a man of action. Naturally, the king chose him to lead a fleet to discover a sea route to India and establish trade relations with her. Vasco da Gama set sail on July 8, 1497.

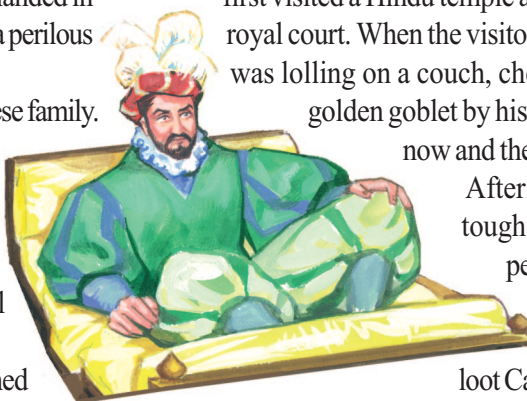
He rounded the Cape of Good Hope, touched East Africa, and sailed across the Indian Ocean to land in Calicut.

The King of Malabar, whom the Portuguese called Zamorin, was away when da Gama landed. The visitors could meet him

only a week later. On May 27, Vasco da Gama entered the city of Calicut on a palanquin and was heralded by the beating of drums, the flying of flags, and the boom of a cannon! The procession first visited a Hindu temple and then brought the guests to the royal court. When the visitors were announced, the Zamorin was lolling on a couch, chewing betel nut. He had a huge golden goblet by his side and would spit into it every now and then!

After an exchange of gifts and some tough negotiations, he finally granted permission for trade. Da Gama left for Portugal in August, but returned some years later only to loot Calicut. He died in Calicut and was

buried there. Centuries later, his mortal remains were taken to Lisbon. An account of Vasco da Gama's voyage is recorded in Alvaro Velho's *Roteiro da Primeira Viagem de Vasco da Gama* (*The Diary of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*).



Congratulations!

The following children have won a Hero Cycle each in the HERO QUIZ Contest published in Chandamama from October 2001:



October 2001

V. Kowsalya, Nagpur.
S. R. Rahul, Bangalore.
Narayan Dev, Bhadrajun, Rajasthan.

November 2001

D. Brinda, Visakhapatnam.
Neha Sinha, Udaipur Court, Tripura
Pranit Prakash Mantri, Amraoti.

December 2001

Viral K. Dave, Dam Nagar, Amareli Dt.
P.V. Raghavendran, Hosur.
Parth K. Pandya, Vadodara.

January 2002

S. Deepak Kumar, Visakhapatnam.
L. Bhavana, Tirupati.
B. S. Yeshoda, Bangalore.

February 2002

K. Sriram, Kolkata.
Shankha Banerjee, Narottam Nagar.

March 2002

Sonam Nagar, Ujjain.
J. Jaiprakash, Chennai.
M. Vidyadhari, Hyderabad.

* * * * *

The children whose names appear below have been declared winners in the OTDC Quiz 1 to 7 published in Chandamama from September 2001. They are entitled to a FREE 3-day 2-nights stay at any of the Panthanivas, upto 4 members of a family.



September 2001

Pariksheet Parag Gokhale, Virar (W).

October 2001

Anil Ajitav, Bhubaneswar.

November 2001

Devi Prasad Nanda, Jajapur.

December 2001

Somesh Mishra, Chidambaram.

January 2002

Nishad S. Kulkarni, Pune.

February 2002

K. Avinash, Vizianagaram.

March 2002

Aarya Bibhas Kumar, Jajpur.

Go places!

If you take one letter from each box in a row and put these letters together, you will find the name of an Indian city or town. We have worked out the first one for you. Can you work out the rest?

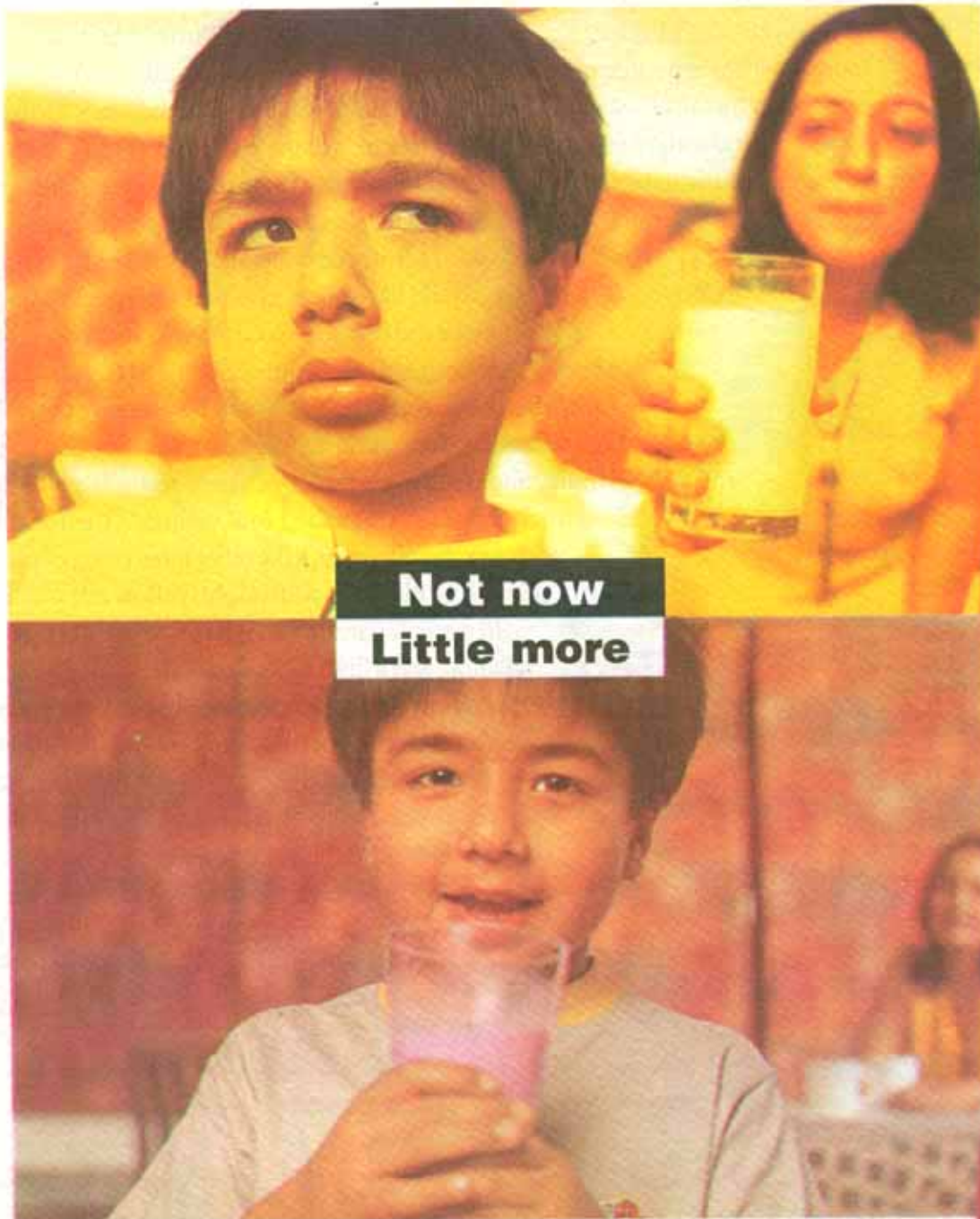
HID	BET	ELK	SHE	SKI
PET	RAN	TIP	NIB	APT
NUT	ARM	ASP	ILL	ASK
VAN	PIN	ZIP	ADO	AGE
THE	SUN	BIT	ELM	ICE
JAM	ASH	MUG	SIM	FUN




Answers : Patna, Nasik, Vizag, Hubli, Jammu





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SHARBAT
ROOH AFZA
Aur ek ho jaye



A Bouquet of Love

he Oaks, Hunter's Lodge, The Parsonage, The Pines, Dumbarnie, Mackinnon's Hall, and Windmere. They are names of some of the old houses that still stand on the outskirts of one of the smaller Indian hill-stations. They were built more than a hundred years ago by the British settlers who sought relief from the searing heat of the plains. Most have fallen into decay and are now inhabited by wild cats, owls, goats, and the occasional mule-driver.

But among these neglected mansions stands a neat, white-washed cottage, Mulberry Lodge. And in it lived an elderly British spinster named Miss Mackenzie. She was well over 80, but no one would have guessed it. She was sprightly and wore old-fashioned but well-preserved dresses. Once a week, she walked to town and bought butter, jam, soap, and sometimes a bottle of eau-de-cologne.

Miss Mackenzie had lived there since her teens, before World War I. Her parents, brother, and sister were no more. She had no relatives in India, and lived on a small pension and gift parcels sent by a childhood friend. She had few visitors - the local padre, the postman, the milkman. Like other lonely old people, she kept a pet, a large black cat with bright, yellow eyes.

In a small garden she grew dahlias, chrysanthemums, gladioli, and a few rare orchids. She knew a great deal about wild flowers, trees, birds, and insects. She never seriously studied them, but had an intimacy with all that grew and flourished around her.

It was September, and the rains were nearly over. Miss Mackenzie's African marigolds were blooming. She hoped the coming winter wouldn't be too severe because she found it increasingly difficult to bear the cold. One day, as she was pottering about in her garden, she saw a schoolboy plucking wild



flowers on the slope above the cottage. "What're you up to, young man?" she called.

Alarmed, the boy tried to dash up the hillside, but slipped on pine needles and slid down the slope into Miss Mackenzie's nasturtium bed. Finding no escape, he gave a bright smile and said, "Good morning, Miss."

He attended the local English-medium school, and wore a blazer and a tie. Like most polite schoolboys, he called every woman "Miss".

"Good morning," said Miss Mackenzie severely. "Would you mind moving out of my flower bed?"

The boy stepped gingerly over the nasturtiums, and looked at Miss Mackenzie with appealing eyes.

"You ought to be in school," she said. "What're you doing here?"

"Picking flowers, Miss." He held up a bunch of ferns and wild flowers.

"Oh," Miss Mackenzie was disarmed. It had been a long time since she had seen a boy taking an interest in flowers.

"Do you like flowers?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss. I'm going to be a botan... a botanist."

"You mean a botanist?"

"Yes, Miss."

"That's unusual. Do you know the names of these flowers?"

"This is a buttercup," he said, showing her a small golden flower. "But I don't know what this is," he said, holding out a pale, pink flower with a heart-shaped leaf.

"It's wild begonia," said Miss Mackenzie. "And that purple stuff is salvia. Do you have any books on flowers?"

"No, Miss."

"Come in and I'll show you one."

She led the boy into a small front room crowded with furniture, books, vases, and jam jars. He sat awkwardly on the edge of a chair.



The cat jumped immediately on to his knees and settled down, purring softly.

"What's your name?" asked Miss Mackenzie, as she rummaged through her books.

"Anil, Miss."

"And where do you live?"

"When school closes, I go to Delhi. My father has a business there."

"Oh, and what's that?"

"Bulbs, Miss."

"Flower bulbs?"

"No. Electric bulbs."

"Ah, here we are!" she said taking a heavy volume from the shelf. "*Flora Himaliensis*, published in 1892, and probably the only copy in India. This is a valuable book, Anil. No other naturalist has recorded as many wild Himalayan flowers. But there are still many plants unknown to the botanists who spend all their time over microscopes instead of in the mountains. Perhaps you'll do something about that one day."

"Yes, Miss."

She lit the stove, and put the kettle on for tea. And then the old English lady and the little Indian boy sat side by side, absorbed in the book. Miss Mackenzie pointed out many flowers that grew around the hill-station, while the boy made notes of their names and seasons.

"May I come again?" asked Anil, when he finally rose to go.



"If you like," said Miss Mackenzie. "But not during school hours. You mustn't miss your classes."

After that, Anil visited Miss Mackenzie about once a week, and nearly always brought a wild flower for her to identify. She looked forward to the boy's visits. Sometimes, when more than a week passed and he hadn't come, she would grumble at the cat.

By the middle of October, with only a fortnight left before school closed, snow fell on the distant mountains. One peak stood high above the others, a white pinnacle against an azure sky. When the sun set, the peak turned from orange to pink and to red.

"How high is that mountain?" asked Anil.

"It must be over 12,000 feet," said Miss Mackenzie. "I always wanted to go there, but there is no proper road. At that height, there'll be flowers that you don't get here—blue gentian, purple columbine."

The day before school closed, Anil came to say good-bye. As he was about to leave, Miss Mackenzie thrust the *Flora Himaliensis* into his hands. "It's a present," she said.

"But I'll be back next year, and I'll be able to look at it, then. Besides, it's so valuable!"

"That's why I'm giving it to you. Otherwise, it will fall into the hands of the junk dealers."

"But, Miss..."

"Don't argue."

The boy tucked the book under his arm, stood at attention, and said, "Good-bye, Miss Mackenzie." It was the first time he had uttered her name.

Strong winds soon brought rain and sleet, killing the flowers in the garden. The cat stayed indoors, curled up at the foot of the bed. Miss Mackenzie wrapped herself in old shawls and mufflers, but still felt cold. Her fingers grew so stiff that it took almost an hour

to open a can of baked beans. Then it snowed, and for several days the milkman did not come.

Tired, she spent most of her time in bed. It was the warmest place. She kept a hot-water bottle against her back, and the cat kept her feet warm. She dreamed of spring and summer. In three months, the primroses would be out, and Anil would return.

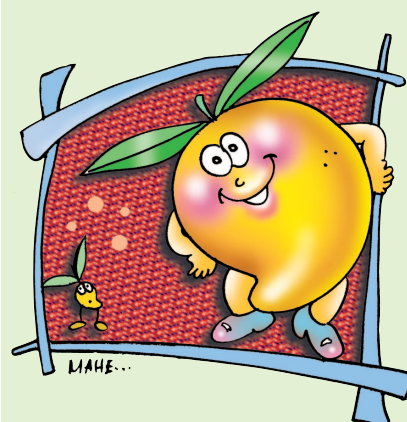
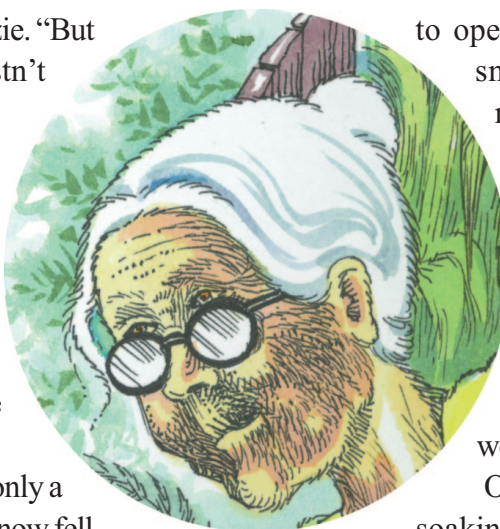
One night the hot-water bottle burst, soaking the bed. The sun didn't shine for several days, and the blankets remained damp. Miss Mackenzie caught a chill and had to keep to her cold, uncomfortable bed.

A strong wind sprang up one night and blew the bedroom window open. Miss Mackenzie was too weak to get up and close it. The wind swept the rain and sleet into the room. The cat snuggled close to its mistress's body. Toward morning, the body lost its warmth, and the cat left the bed and started scratching about the floor.

As sunlight streamed through the window, the milkman arrived. He poured some milk into the saucer at the doorstep, and the cat jumped down from the window-sill.

The milkman called a greeting to Miss Mackenzie. There was no answer. Knowing she was always up before sunrise, he poked his head in the open window and called again.

Miss Mackenzie did not answer. She had gone to the mountain where the blue gentian and purple columbine grow.



Chew this!

While you are slurping over that juicy mango, chew this: of the 1,000 and odd varieties of mangoes in India, the smallest variety weighs just a few grams, while the largest weighs about 2 kg each!



All that glitters...

What do you think gave lustre and sheen to India's kings and queens of yore? It was not the sparkle of wit or intelligence: there were as many dull men and women among them as with the rest of humbler mankind. Actually, it was the brilliant jewels they wore that made them glitter!



They owed this glitz to a very clever man called Chanakya who, in the 3rd century B.C., laid down the rules of statecraft in a composition called the *Arthashastra*. He wrote that every king must be aware of the mineral wealth in his kingdom and control the yield of mines. The kings seem to have taken his words to heart. They made sure that the best gems, minerals, and metals mined in their kingdom reached the royal treasury. Well, would you then blame them for picking out the best of the sparklers to adorn themselves?

Twinkle-toeing in Assam



When one speaks of dances, some of the first names that spring to the mind are Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, and Odissi. Here's one more to add to that list. The Sattriya. This is a little-known dance drama form prevalent in Assam. It is said to have been created by Shankaradeva, the famous Vaishnava saint of the State who lived in the 15th century. The Sattriya was once performed only by men; later women took to it, too. Like Kathakali, it is a dance drama style, which is not divided into scenes but held together by the dominating presence of a narrator or the *sutradhar*. Want to learn the Sattriya?

Babbler's paradise



Tower of Babel, move over! Here comes India, the land of languages. Did you know that more than 300 languages are in use and 1,652 dialects are spoken in India? Scholars say about this remarkable diversity that the language changes every ten miles as the crow flies. Ever wondered how we manage to understand one another? Another example of unity in diversity.



More masti in
Icecream
Just add Rooh Afza



**SHARHAT
ROOH AFZA**
Aur ek ho jaye



Enter the Heroes of India Quiz and win fabulous prizes

Heroes of India - 9

Indian sports is full of heroes - past and present. How many of the following sports heroes do you know?

**Three
all correct entries
will receive bicycles
as awards.***

1

I recently equalled the legendary Don Bradman's milestone by scoring 29 centuries in Test cricket. Do you know who I am?

2

I became a sensation after winning the All-England Badminton Championship last year. You know me don't you?

3

I'm popularly known as 'the Flying Sikh'. I finished fourth in the final of 400m at the 1960 Olympics. Do you know me?

4

I won the World Amateur Billiards Championship on debut in 1985, to become the youngest ever champion. What is my name?

5

I won the Junior Wimbledon title in 1953, at the age of 16. I am the father of an equally famous son. Who am I?

Fill in the blanks next to each question legibly. Which of these five is your favourite hero and why? Write 10 words on **My favourite sports hero is**

Name of participant:.....

.....Age:.....Class:.....

Address:.....

Pin:.....Ph:.....

Signature of participant:.....

Signature of parent:.....

Please tear off the page and mail it to

Heroes of India Quiz-9

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On/before **July 5, 2002**


Instructions

1. The contest is open to children in the age group 8-14 years.
2. *Three winners will be selected for this contest from entries in all the language editions. **Winners will receive bicycles of appropriate size.** If there are more than one all correct entries, winners will be selected on the basis of the best description of **My favourite hero**.
3. The judges' decision will be final.
4. No correspondence will be entertained in this regard.
5. The winners will be intimated by post.

**Prizes brought
to you by**



The Precious Pearl



King Vikram made his way to the old gnarled tree again in the dead of night. A skull crunched under his feet and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy. But King Vikram was unfazed. He walked towards the ancient tree where the corpse was hanging. He brought it down, slung it on his shoulder, and began walking back to the cremation ground.

Soon the vampire that possessed the corpse began to talk: "O King, you're no doubt a very bold man. But are you wise? I wonder, because you've been repeatedly trying to take possession of me, without understanding the consequences. Listen to this story of a wise king who looked at his own sons' actions to adjudge which one was the noblest. That will relieve the dreariness of your journey and, perhaps, also teach you a lesson."

Then the Vetala narrated this story:

King Chitrassen of Virpuri was a noble ruler. He was also an avid collector of curios. Over the years he had collected many precious things, the most valuable of which was a very unique pink pearl.

When he grew old, he decided to divide his wealth among his three sons. Although he gave away everything else, he hesitated to part with the pink pearl. 'This is a unique pearl,'

he thought. 'I shall give it only to the one who deserves it the most: the noblest among my sons, who will recognise its value and not misuse it.' He thought very deeply, but could not decide which of them was the noblest. So, he decided to put them to a test.

He sent for them. "My sons," he said, "I've decided to give this beautiful pearl to one of you. I shall put you to a small test to find out which of you deserves this unique article. The three of you must keep away from the capital for one year. You can go anywhere you like. At the end of the year, you must come back and tell me what you think has been your noblest act of the year. I shall then judge which of you deserves this precious pearl. Go, my sons. May God be with you!"

Soon the three sons – Chatursen, Mitrasen, and Virsen—took off in different directions. After one year, they returned to the capital.

Chatursen, the eldest, was the first to narrate his experiences. "Father, I travelled a lot in the last year. I met many people and did all kinds of work for my living. Once, when I was working for a rich merchant,

he set me a difficult task. He gave me a big casket full of precious gems and told me to deliver it to his brother, a jeweller in another town.

"The merchant did not count the gems that he handed to me. I could have taken a gem or two and no one would have known. But I took the job earnestly. I delivered the casket intact to his brother. He was so impressed with my honesty that he rewarded me with gold coins."

The king listened without a comment. He then turned to his second son. "And you, my son? What was the noblest act you performed in the last one year?"

Mitrasen began to recount his experiences. "After I left the capital city, I began galloping towards the eastern boundary of our kingdom. On the way, I came upon a wide and deep river. I decided to rest on its bank for a while. I was about to fall asleep under a tree, when I heard a shrill scream. I looked around and saw a small boy, in the river, who was struggling to keep his head above the water. I plunged into the river, unmindful of the danger to myself. The river was deep and turbulent and the boy had been swept far away from the shore. Soon, I caught hold of him and brought him ashore. His mother thanked me profusely for saving her son."

"You did your duty and you're to be commended for that," said King Chitrasen. He then turned to his third son, Virsen, and asked him what noble deed he had to narrate.

Virsen said, "Father, I travelled far and wide and met many different kinds of people. But when it was time to return, I realised that I had done nothing that was really noble. I began the journey homeward, quite dejected. One early morning, as I was riding past some mountains, I saw a man sleeping on the ground right on top of a great cliff. He must have chosen that spot in the darkness of the night and probably had not noticed that the cliff overlooked a deep ravine. Had he rolled in his sleep, he would have gone over the edge and fallen down to his death.

"When I went near the sleeping man, I saw that he was an old enemy of mine. He had harmed me many times in the past. My first impulse was to leave him to his fate and carry on. But I could not do that,



knowing that he might roll down any moment. I went up and woke him.

“He woke up, looked around, and realised where he was. He moved away quickly. When he recognised me, instead of thanking me for saving his life, he spoke harshly: ‘I think you want to humiliate me by showing that you have saved my life. You didn’t do this out of kindness. I’ll make you pay for this.’ He then walked away. I resumed my journey. But I know that I wouldn’t have been happy had I left him there to die. That was the only thing of note that I did in the last one year, father.”

King Chitrassen looked thoughtfully at his three sons. Then he brought out the pearl and handed it to Virsen. He said, “My son, you deserve this most precious pearl in my treasury.”

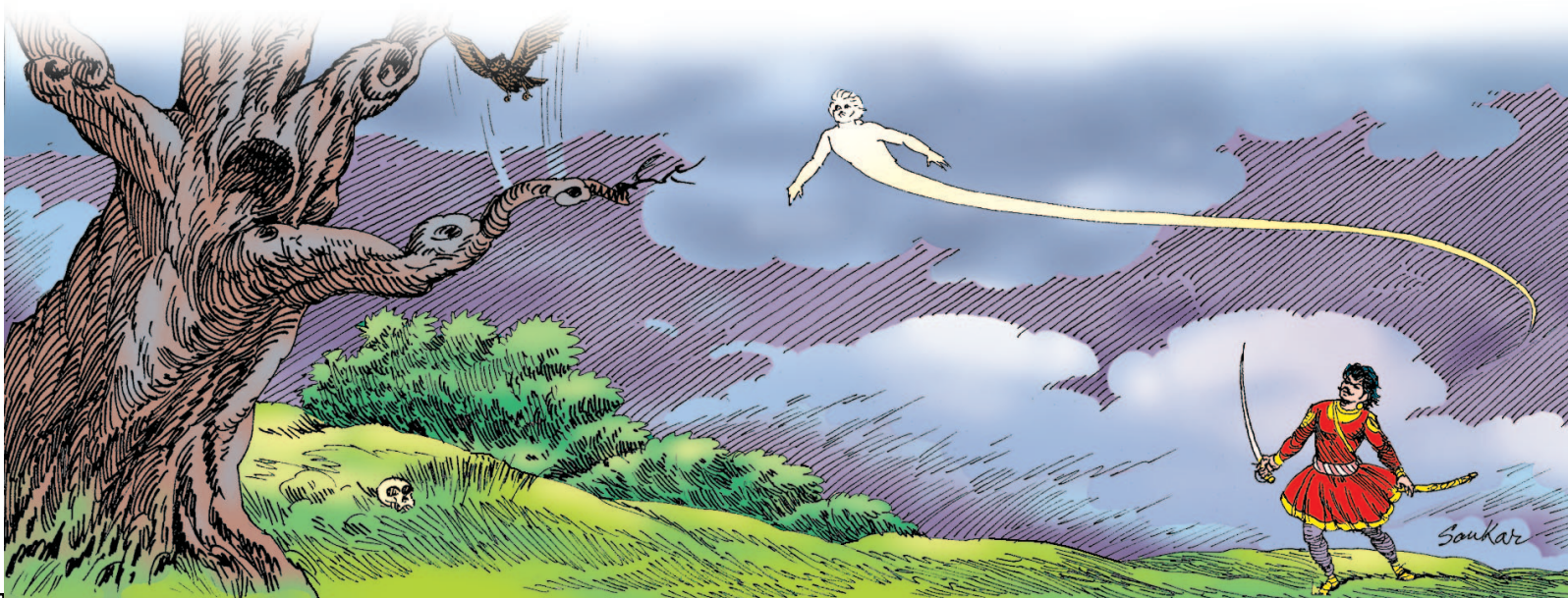
The Vetala finished his narration and asked King Vikram: “What made King Chitrassen gift the pearl to Virsen? After all, Virsen had only woken up a sleeping man. Didn’t Mithrasen do a more heroic act by saving a child from drowning? And was not the honesty and integrity of the eldest son more commendable? Wasn’t the king blinded by his love for the youngest son? Answer me if you can. And if you know the answer but still keep mum, your head will shatter into pieces.”

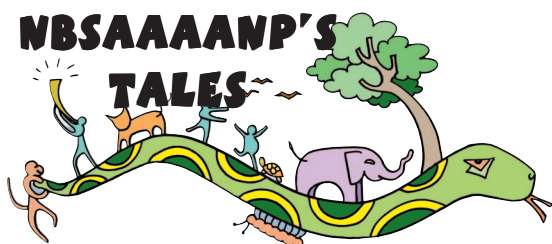
King Vikram did not have to think for an answer. “King Chitrassen’s decision was not blinded by love. In fact, it was a wise choice that he made. Chatursen proved that he was an honest man. But he couldn’t have done anything else without shaming himself. Had he taken even one gem, he would have become a thief. As for Mithrasen, his deed proved that he was



courageous. But any honourable man, in the same situation, would have done it. It would be cowardice to not help a drowning boy. But Virsen had done a good deed without expecting any reward. And he did it to an enemy, a man who had often harmed him. He was certain that he wouldn’t even be thanked for the good deed, and yet he did it. This shows his selfless and noble nature. He fully deserved the unique pearl.”

As soon as King Vikram finished answering, the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





Home Again

I was glad to be back. When you are a young turtle, swimming a few thousand kilometres of the open sea can be a wee bit tiring! It's not only the distance, but the many dangers that my friends and I had to face on the way. Those nasty nets of the big fishing ships, which drag up everything they encounter in the ocean, the murderous propellers of motorboats, and even the occasional killer whale though, I must say, they usually leave us alone. They probably don't like our tough carapace irritating their stomachs! Oh, sorry, sometimes we use this turtle-talk which you humans may not understand... the 'carapace' is that hard part of my back that you sometimes call a shell.

But as I was saying, I was glad to be back. I cannot quite remember when we left this lovely beach, it was so long ago, maybe 25-30 years, and I was just about born! All I can recollect is that I was there with a few dozen brothers and sisters, under the night sky lit by the stars and a half-moon. We all had an irresistible urge to waddle towards a massive shiny dark stretch on the horizon. It was the sea, at that time gently lapping against the beach where I was born.

I was apparently one of several dozen babies to emerge from the nest that my mother had made on this beach. No, not a bird-like nest... it was just a deep hole dug into the beach sand, into which the Mommy turtles dropped their eggs. And I still don't believe what one of my aunts (more than double my age, so

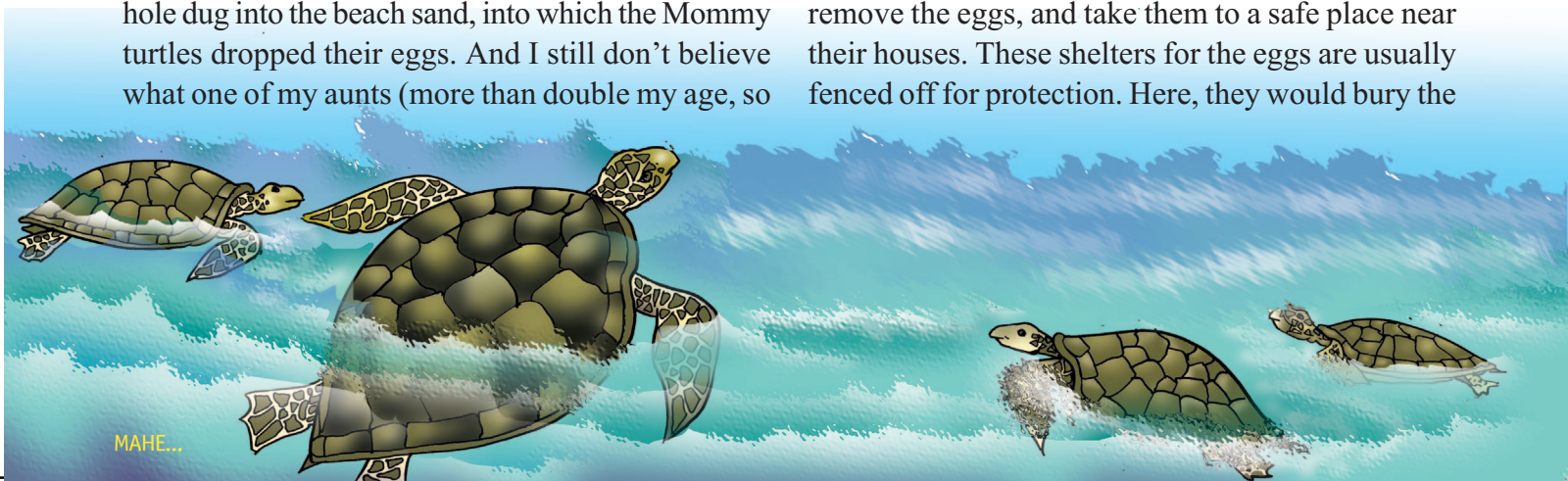
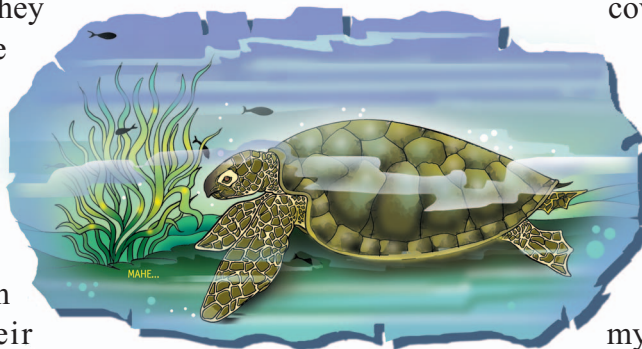
she sure knew a lot more!) told me... that I actually emerged from one such egg, and dug my own way out of two feet of sand! Sadly, I do not know anything about my mother, but this aunt said that mother turtles leave the beach immediately after laying the eggs and covering the holes again with sand. It was this aunt who gave me my somewhat tongue-twisting name, Ulrid...

There's actually no end to the unbelievable things that she has whispered into my ear, during our long long journey. Listen to this one: when I

was born, I was apparently so small I could fit into the palm of your just-born brother or sister... and now, I'm as big as one of your school desks. Three feet across from one tip of my carapace to the other... and weighing 60 kilos!

But my favourite story is the one about my human saviours. My birthplace is what you call Goa. It seems that around the time I was born, turtles were hunted by some humans for their flesh (Yech! How could anyone find us tasty?) and even our eggs were stolen for food! But there were these kind humans, too, who could not bear to see this happen.

My aunt tells me that one such group of people actually combed the beach for turtle nesting holes. Whenever they located one, they would carefully remove the eggs, and take them to a safe place near their houses. These shelters for the eggs are usually fenced off for protection. Here, they would bury the



eggs and wait for them to hatch. Guess what: I was one of these “rescued” eggs! So, if it had not been for these kind people, I’d probably have ended up as turtle egg soup in one of your restaurants!

And now I was back on the beach of my birth. I had been very far away, out in the Indian Ocean beyond what you call Sri Lanka. We had all swum off to those waters immediately after being born, to grow up and to learn the ways of life. Soon, though, we got the urge to come back, joining the mass of aunts, sisters, and cousins all of whom are heading back to their birthplace.

As soon as I landed, I was surrounded by a few of my friends who had arrived a little earlier. They gave me the most welcome news I’d heard in months. The entire beach, it seems, had been declared protected for our species, the Olive ridley turtle. It was jointly patrolled by the fisherfolk and wildlife officials. No longer was there the danger of someone killing us or stealing our eggs.

Even as I rejoiced to hear this, a tinge of sadness came over me, and anger at the ways in which humans can sometimes hurt us. I remembered my close friend Ulvia, and the excitement with which we had started off on this journey back to our birthplace. We had pestered our aunts to tell us how we would find our way there, and they simply said, follow your senses. We did, and it brought me back. Not, however, Ulvia. Half-way across the seas, she was caught in a trawler



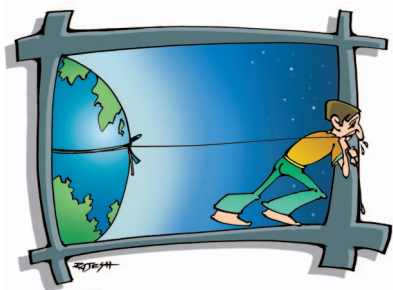
net. The rest of us had surrounded her, helpless to do anything, while she struggled...for almost an hour, she tried to bite her way to freedom. Unable to get to the surface to breathe, she finally died, and I can’t forget her last look at me. It was full of sadness, but also a defiant encouragement...she seemed to be telling me, ‘I can’t make it, but you must.’

I did. And not too soon. My stomach was bursting, I was dying to get away from my friends and find a spot to dig. Why? Oh, didn’t I tell you? I now had my own eggs in my belly, and I was all ready to lay them! I hope you’ll join our human friends in Goa, to protect my babies!

- by **Ashish Kothari**

Courtesy: The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and Kalpavriksh

There are five kinds of sea turtles that come to the Indian coast, migrating thousands of kilometres to come and nest. They are the Olive ridley, the Leatherback, the Green sea, the Loggerhead, and the Hawksbill turtles. The Leatherback is the biggest, its carapace upto 6 feet long and its weight upto 500 kg! It can migrate several thousand kilometres! On some beaches in Orissa, there can be mass nesting by half a million Olive ridleys ...one of the greatest spectacles of nature. It is illegal to hunt sea turtles anywhere in India’s marine and coastal areas.



When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

- John Muir

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed.

- Mahatma Gandhi





Jammu and Kashmir, often described as “the paradise on earth”, is the northernmost State of our country. It is situated between 32.17 degrees and 36.58 degrees north latitude and 37.26 degrees and 80.30 degrees east longitude.

Pakistan and Afghanistan in the west, China in the east, and Himachal Pradesh in the south surround the State. It ranks 6th in area and 17th in population among the States and Union Territories of India.

This State comprises three distinct climatic regions – the cold desert areas of Ladakh, the temperate Kashmir valley, and the sub-tropical region of Jammu. Also, there is a sharp rise of altitude from 1,000 ft to 28,250 ft above the sea level within the State.

Jammu and Kashmir is also the only State that has two capitals – for summer and winter. Srinagar is the State’s summer capital, and Jammu, its winter capital. Urdu, Kashmiri, Hindi, Dogri, Pahari, and Ladakhi are the languages spoken in the State.

THE RIDDLE OF THE LAUGHING FISH

The beautiful kingdom of Kashmir was once ruled by King Feroz Shah and his queen, Shakila. One day, a fisherwoman came selling fish under the queen’s *dar*. In her basket was a peculiar looking fish.

“Do you have any female fish?” asked the queen of the fisherwoman.

“No, your highness! I have only male fish,” she replied, flashing a smile, and prepared to leave.

Just then they heard a strange laugh. The queen was startled because she realised that it was the peculiar fish that laughed aloud.



A Legend

A popular legend is that the entire Kashmir valley was once a lake as huge as the sea. A dreadful demon was wrecking havoc in the place. He had to be killed if peace was to return to the lake. Kashyapa, the grandson of Brahma, helped by draining out all the water in the lake. Then the demon was killed by Parvati who dropped a mountain on him. This legendary mountain is none other than the Hari Parbat, the hill that forms the famous backdrop of Srinagar.

The mocking laugh of the fish annoyed the queen. She flounced off to the king and told him about the laugh of the fish. Among his courtiers was a *bod vizier* named Hussain. The king liked to challenge him with new tasks. He now ordered him to solve this riddle. “If you don’t have an answer by the next new *zoon*, you’ll lose your head!”

Hussain decided to travel far and wide in search of an answer. As he travelled, he came upon a *bujer gryus* called Rehman who was going to Pehelgam. ‘Let me make friends with this old man. Maybe he can help me,’ thought Hussain. The two became friends soon and continued their journey together.

As the day grew hot, Hussain and Rehman became tired.

“Wouldn’t it be pleasant if we took turns to carry each other during the journey?” asked Hussain.

‘Carry each other! What could he mean?’ thought the surprised Rehman, but he didn’t reply.

A little later, they passed a *khah* of ripe corn awaiting harvest. Hussain promptly asked Rehman: “Are these corns eaten or not?”

Rehman, not understanding what he meant, merely blabbered, “I don’t know...” He thought his new friend was quite peculiar.

That evening, the two travellers arrived at a village. As they walked into the village



mosque, nobody saluted them or invited them in. Hussain exclaimed, “What are we doing in a cemetery?”

“Can’t you see the people here? This is not a cemetery,” commented Rehman.

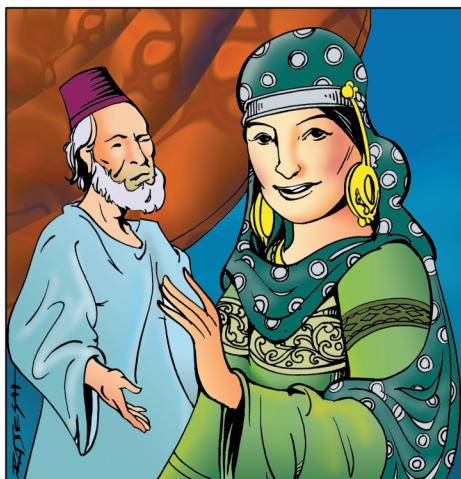
On their way out, they came to a cemetery where some people were distributing *dum gosht* and *kulchas* in memory of their dear departed. “Ah! What a splendid city!” exclaimed Hussain, as he relished the delicacies.

Rehman was perturbed. ‘What a madman! He calls the *zamin* a *pon*, and the *pon* a *zamin*!’ However, he kept silent.

When they reached the outskirts of the *shahar* where Rehman lived, he decided to invite Hussain to his *garoo*. He told Hussain: “Young man, while you are here, you’re welcome to stay at my *garoo*.”

Hussain replied: “Thank you for your kindness. I shall be there by nightfall. *Me wan*, are the beams of your *lar* strong?”

The farmer left, laughing uncontrollably while pondering on the youth’s *bekulazi*.





At his *garoo*, he told his daughter Zohra about his travelling companion and his unusual questions.

“I’ve invited him here, this strange boy who asked about the beams of our house. He seems a fool,” said Rehman.

Now Zohra was a very *bod kuns*. “But, father, the young man seems to be wise!” she said.

“How do you say so, Zohra? His questions were nonsensical!” said Rehman.

“No, father. When he asked about the beams,

he actually wanted to know if we could afford to entertain him,” explained Zohra.

Rehman was impressed. ‘Maybe she can make sense of his other comments, too. Who knows? Hussain may be sensible, after all!’ he thought.

“All right, then. What did he mean when he said we could take turns to carry each other?” asked Rehman.

“He meant that each of you could take turns to tell a story to while away the time,” explained Zohra.

“What about his second question: about the corns being eaten?” asked Rehman.

Zohra laughed. “Oh, father, you’re a farmer yourself. Couldn’t you guess that one? When farmers default on tax payments, the collector usually takes away the corn as penalty. In which case, the corn is as good as eaten, isn’t it?” said she.

“Okay, but why did he call the city a cemetery, and the cemetery a city?” asked a puzzled Rehman.

“To him, a city is where people are kind and charitable, and when this is missing, the place is as cold as a cemetery, no matter how well populated it is. In the city, people were indifferent, but it was not so in the cemetery. So he called the former a cemetery and the latter a city,” Zohra explained to her father.

Tourist Attraction

“*Gar Bar-ru-e-Zamin Ast; Hamin Ast, Hamin Ast Hamin Asto.*” If there is a paradise on this earth, this is it, this is it, this is it. This is the couplet engraved on the ceiling of Diwan-i-Aam in the Red Fort in Delhi built by the Mughal emperor Shahjahan. This verse is often recollected by travellers after visiting Kashmir.

Kashmir has always been referred to as the ‘paradise on earth’. The beautiful lakes, snow-capped mountains, picturesque valleys, the fields blooming with saffron and other flowers... the list is endless.

The Dal Lake, the world famous water body, was described as the ‘lake par excellence’ by Sir Walter Lawrence. It is also described as a jewel in the crown of Kashmir. The Dal Lake is also famous for its *shikaras* and houseboats. Another major attraction of this lake is that it changes its mood and scenery all through the day and for every few kilometres. There are majestic gardens on the banks of the lakes.

And the adventurous among the tourists can go trekking or skiing on the slopes of the mountains, that are the source of many rivers which flow through the State.



Handicrafts

Kashmir is famous for its woollen carpets which are woven by hand and embroidered with intricate designs in subtle colours.



The other popular handicrafts are the Kashmiri shawls, papier-mache objects,

crewelwork and embroidery, basket weaving, and walnut woodcarving.

“Your explanations show him to be a *bod mard*,” observed her father.

Now Zohra was quite impatient to meet Hussain. He arrived at Rehman’s house in time for dinner as he had promised.

“*Tsu kus chhukh*? What has made you travel so far?” queried Zohra.

Hussain told them about the laughing fish and the king’s threat.

Zohra exclaimed, “But the riddle is quite simple: it means that there is someone in the palace planning to kill the king.”

Hussain was convinced that she was right. He took Zohra and Rehman back with him.

He went up to the king. “*Jahanpanah*, we’ve interpreted the secret message. This girl, Zohra, will explain it to you,” he said.

“*Huzoor!*” began Zohra. “The fish that laughed was a prophetic fish. It laughed because it knew that appearances could be deceptive. It wanted to warn you about a female, who is actually a male in

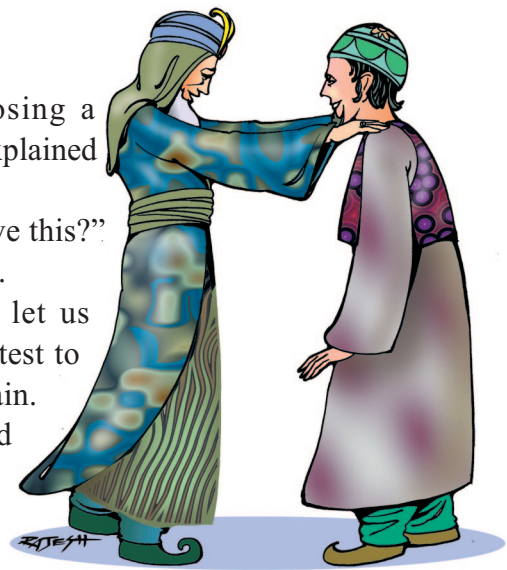
disguise, and is posing a threat to your life,” explained Zohra.

“But can you prove this?” exclaimed the queen.

“Your Highness, let us put your maids to a test to find out,” said Hussain.

The king and queen agreed to test the maids. Hussain arranged for a wide and deep pit to be dug, and then asked each maid to jump across it. All the maids except one failed to clear it. The one who jumped across was soon proved to be a man in disguise, waiting for an opportunity to take the king’s life.

Queen Shakila and King Feroz Shah were happy. They rewarded Zohra and Hussain for saving the king’s life. Soon Hussain and Zohra were married, and Rehman was thrilled to have found a suitable groom for his brilliant daughter.



Glossary

Dar – Window

Bod – Intelligent

Zoon – Moon

Bujer Gryus – Old farmer

Khah – Farm

Zamin – Land

Pon – Water

Shahar – City

Garoo – Home

Me wan – Tell me

Lar – House

Bekulazi – Foolishness

Bod Kuns – Intelligent
younger Female

Bod mard – Intelligent
man

Tsu kus chhukh – Who
are you?

Great wall of India

Did you know that India too had a great wall that was about 40 km loooooooooooooong? Rana Kumbha, an Indian king, built this one to protect his kingdom from invaders. It ran up and down the Aravalli hills, with 34 mighty fortresses built at special places, all along it.




Death by fangs



It is said that around 40,000 people die every year from snakebite. And 75 percent of them happen to be in India - the king cobra is said to be responsible for most of the bites.

When the fairies came a-shopping



Milford Haven was a small town on the sand swept coast of Wales. The people there lived a quiet, sedate life. That is, till strange, magical things began to happen. Like the sudden disappearance of goods from the marketplace. And the sudden appearance of money beside the shopkeepers whose goods had vanished!

One day, when the marketplace was swarming with people, one of the shopkeepers, Griffith, found a moment of rest. He saw his last customer off and sat back with a sigh, wiping the sweat off his brows. He was startled to see a huge pumpkin suddenly disappear from under his very nose! In its place appeared a few gold coins – just like that! Griffith picked them up, puzzled. Beside the coins was a small golden wand. He looked all around to see who could have left it there. But how could he know, in that crowded marketplace? He picked it up and put it in his pocket along with the coins.

But what was this? Who were these strange looking creatures? They weren't there a minute ago! Griffith could not believe his eyes. He saw tiny creatures dressed in vibrant colours briskly walking around.

They seemed to be shopping, too. Griffith rubbed his eyes and pinched himself to check if he was dreaming. 'They must be fairies,' he thought excitedly.

MAHE...

He soon realised that he alone had seen the creatures, 'It must be the wand I picked up that has helped me see these fairies!' he deduced. As he watched, the little creatures picked up vegetables and fruits and other things from different shops and left gold coins as payment.

Now he understood. 'Oh! So it's you who're responsible for all the mysterious appearances and disappearances in our town!'

A true-blue businessman that he was, he observed keenly and noted down all the things that caught the fancy of the fairies.

The next day, he gathered in his shop all those articles. He then waited for them. When the market was in full swing, the fairies came.

They went around chattering excitedly and when they passed his shop, they noticed that he had everything they wanted. They were transfixed.

They headed straight for his shop and began picking up all they wanted. By the time they left, a big heap of gold coins had collected by Griffith's side.

This happened on the following days too, and soon Griffith was a very wealthy man indeed.

One day, as he took a walk along the shore, he saw an island in the distance. He had never seen it before. As he stood and stared, he could see in the horizon, a few fairies flying towards it. 'That must be where the fairies live,' he mused. 'Thanks to the wand I have, I'm able to see this island. I must use this power to my advantage.'

The more he thought of it, the more he liked the idea. He soon hit upon a plan to improve trade with the fairies so that he might grow even richer. 'I must go to the island with my goods. I shall surely find more buyers there – surely not all of them turn up at our market every day. That will make me richer! Besides, I shall be able to cut out the

competition from the other merchants in the market.'

The next day he loaded his boat with the choicest goods and set out for the island. On reaching there, he jumped out on to the land. As he dragged his merchandise on to the shore, a few fairies saw him. They were stunned to see a man in an island that was not visible to human eyes. They rushed to inform their friends.

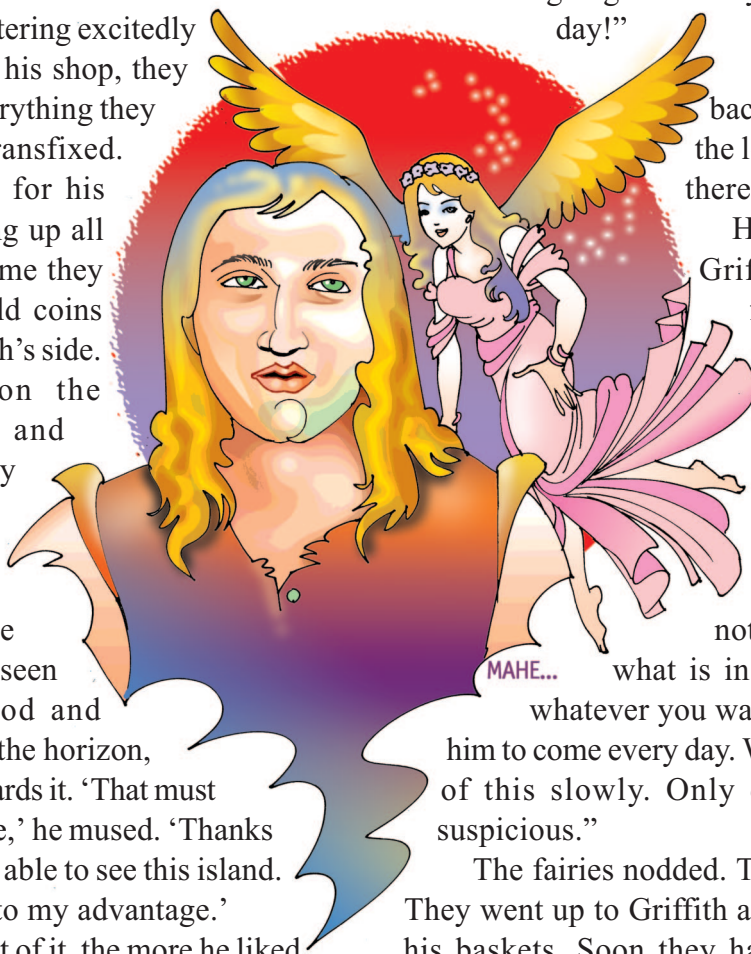
The news caused a sensation in the fairyland. Many fairies flocked to the shore to see the intruder. Griffith was happy to see them, of course. "Come, my friends," he shouted. "See what I've brought for you! Buy them from me and save yourselves the trouble of going all the way to Milford Haven every day!"

But the fairies hung back, undecided. Just then, the leader of the fairies came there.

He was in time to hear Griffith's invitation to his fellow fairies. He gathered them around him and addressed them: "Don't be alarmed. This man has grown greedy. And his greed will lead to his downfall. But let him not suspect that we know what is in his mind. Go and buy whatever you want from him. And invite him to come every day. We shall get at the bottom of this slowly. Only don't let him become suspicious."

The fairies nodded. They trusted their leader. They went up to Griffith and began rummaging in his baskets. Soon they had bought all that they wanted. "Come back tomorrow, same time, same place!" one bright-eyed fellow told Griffith, who was thrilled at the success of his venture.

After he had left, the leader called a meeting again. "When he comes back, try to find out how he could see this island which no human can see.





For, if other humans also find out our secret and begin to land here, we'll know no peace."

The next day, when Griffith came with his goods, the fairies gave him a gushing welcome. Griffith was flattered by their welcome, and fell plinkety-plonk into their trap.

"Your vegetables are so fresh today," said one pretty young thing, fluttering her long lashes at Griffith. "Thanks, my dear!" answered he gruffly. The pretty thing asked, "How did you find us, by the way? I thought we were invisible to human eyes."

"Well, one day one of you left a wand behind in my shop and since then, I've been able to see you," he answered.

"Can I see that wand?" asked Miss Flutter Eyes.

How could he deny her anything? Out popped the wand from his pocket. She took it and turned it this way and that. 'Ah, this is Daisy's! She had lost it some time back and couldn't find it anywhere,' she thought.

She conveyed the information to her friends after Griffith left that day. The fairies then hatched a plan to recover the wand from him.

When Griffith next came to the island, the pretty young fairy went up to him and offered to show him round the island. The island was flush with gems and precious stones. Even the houses were built of sparkling gems – rubies and emeralds and diamonds. Griffith's eyes gleamed with greed and he wished to possess all this wealth. "You can take back as many gems as you can carry," murmured Miss Flutter Eyes demurely. "But you'll have to give us something in return."

"What, what?" gasped Griffith, greedily.

"Nothing very big," she replied, keeping her voice quiet and steady. "Just that little wand you showed me yesterday."

Griffith was still in a tizzy. He agreed. Then the fairy showed him a storehouse heaped with gems of all colours and shapes. He grabbed as many as he could and loaded his boat with them. He then handed the wand to her and set off for home.

Foolish Griffith! No sooner had he set out in his boat than he found his wealth diminishing little by little. Puzzled and angry, he turned around to see if he could spot any fairy on the shore of whom he could demand an explanation. But the fairy island itself had vanished! Griffith realised that without the wand, he could not see the fairies anymore. He regretted having given up the wand to them. But it was too late.

Back home, although Griffith waited and waited at the market for the fairies, they were never seen in Milford Haven again.

**P
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One who sits
between two
chairs
may easily
fall down.

Russian proverb



Speak the truth, but leave
immediately after!

Slovenian proverb



Manoj Das

Did your grandma tell you a story that left you rather puzzled? Did your father or mother give you an instruction that disagreed with the moral of a story you had read?

Well, we could probably help you to find answers to your queries! Prof. Manoj Das, who has written several books for children, will answer your questions in this column. Share your doubts with him, resolve them and grow with confidence.



*Send your questions to :
Ask Away, Chandamama India
Ltd. No.82 Defence Officers'
Colony, Ekkatuthangal,
Chennai - 600 097 or e-mail to
askaway@chandamama.org.*

Q In your answer to the question on Ekalavya in the last issue, you had mentioned that Ekalavya had learnt a skill and not the responsibility and the ethics that go with it. At the same time, Drona's son, Aswathama, used the Brahmastra without knowing how to call it back, although he knew the implications of using it. Can we say, Drona had failed to impart ethics to his own son?

- Sudhanshu Das, Kolkata

A One of the many great qualities of the epic *Mahabharata* is, it depicts the reality of men and matters with disarming frankness. Thousands of years have passed, and it is difficult for us to appreciate some of the values that guided our ancestors. It was a rule that one must not master a power without learning and swearing by certain principles which restricted the application of that power. It is unfortunate that some of those who swore by such principles violated the principles. (People do worse in our times and often get away with their misdeeds.) The *Mahabharata* does not glorify such characters. It presents them as they were. But that does not diminish the value of the rule.

It will be difficult to justify Drona's conduct towards Ekalavya if we look at it from our point of view – society was governed by quite different norms in that remote past. Certain powers should be vested only in those who were responsible for administration and protection of the kingdom. If even such people could not check themselves from

misusing their power, what about those who had not at all been committed to the necessary code of conduct? This is the principle which inspired Drona to render Ekalavya ineffective – more so when the teacher saw that the young man had already misused his power in an alarming way – applying it on a dog.

We must also note that Ekalavya's greatness in unhesitatingly obeying his teacher's advice is acknowledged by the epic. The *Mahabharata* shows the human beings in their glory as well as in their weaknesses.

Q We in India have always believed that man was created by God. Is it not an insult to man that he should be looked upon as a descendant of the monkey? Am I not right in refusing to accept Darwin's theory of Evolution?

- Sandip K. Rao

A We believe that not only man, but everything was created by God. All the creatures, including the monkey, are essentially divinity in disguise. The question is, who came first? Today, there is no doubt that the monkeys and practically all the other creatures were born long before man was born. You have every right to suspect the Darwinian theory. Prof. Beals, a noted biologist, says: "There is not the slightest evidence from the facts that man descended from any other organism in Nature."

Darwin himself admitted that the human mind as it is, cannot "be trusted when it draws such grand

conclusions.” Indeed, in his work, he has often used the phrase “We may well suppose”. He never asserted his views.

Having said this, I must add that I cannot accept your attitude to the monkey. Do you really believe that man is necessarily better than the monkey? The monkey is governed by his instinct. It has no intelligence and no free will as man has. How well do you think has man used his intelligence and free will? Had he not made a ‘monkey business’ of the qualities and powers with which Nature or Providence endowed him?

The truth as it is universally accepted today is that

there has been a gradual development of consciousness upon this earth – plant life paving the way for animal life, the animal life being surpassed by the life of man, who is gifted with a powerful asset, that is, his mind.

A great Indian visionary, Sri Aurobindo, sees man as capable of surpassing his mind and reaching a new height which he terms as the Supermind. Of course, man must aspire for that and prepare for that condition, spiritually.

For your information, several universities in the West refused to include Darwin in their syllabi. The ban was lifted in the seventies of the 20th century.

**ALL NEW!
JUST FOR YOU !!**

**Here are some new products
in the market that might interest you!**

Dabur's Hajmola **More flavours for fun**



Do you find good food irresistible? Then, keep Hajmola handy. Dabur's Hajmola, the delicious digestive drops, now come in four irresistible flavours: mango, pineapple, imli and santara! They are the great-tasting way to digestion. Check out your local outlet and pick your choice of Hajmola. Keep healthy the fun way.

Mysore Sandal's offer **Care for skin and hair!**

You know that sandalwood keeps you cool and pleasant, don't you? So when the mercury zooms this summer, be ready with your Mysore Sandal Soap, to protect you from prickly heat. And to make your summer even more pleasant Mysore sandalwood now has an exciting offer for you. If you buy two cakes of Mysore Sandal Soap, you get one premium quality comb free. So you can take care of your skin and hair at the same time!



Rasna launches Rozana

Ready to sip, healthy drinks this summer!

Rasna Limited has launched 'Rozana', a healthy refreshing line of drinks across the country. Rozana Amrit, Fruit Booster (International) and Ras are all affordably priced natural, healthy ready to drink products.

Rozana Amrit drinks come in three flavours: Orange, Mango and Nimbu Pani. The Rozana Ras drinks are available in

Orange, Mango and Pineapple flavours and come in two pack sizes: 100ml and 200ml.



The Rozana Fruit Booster (International), packaged in colourful glass bottles, is available in three flavours, Orange, Mango and Pineapple. Watch out for these latest offerings from Rasna, when you next hit the market!



JUNIOR CHANDAMAMA



TOPIRAJ AND LANGUR

Topiraj lived in a small village on the banks of a river. He was a cap-seller. His father and grandfather were cap-sellers, too. The people in the nearby villages also bought caps only from Topiraj.

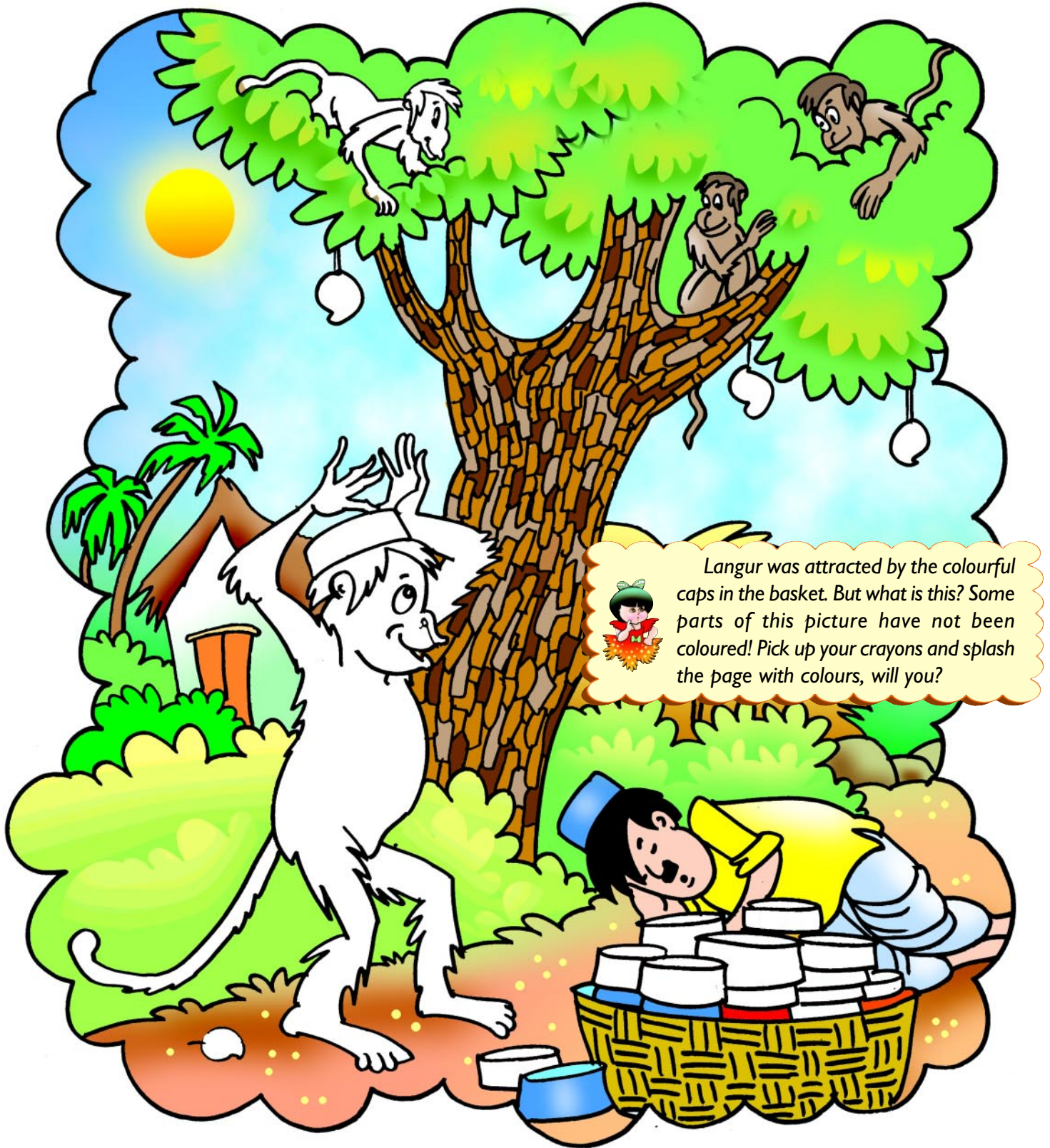


Can you identify Topiraj in this picture? What kind of work are the other men in this picture doing?

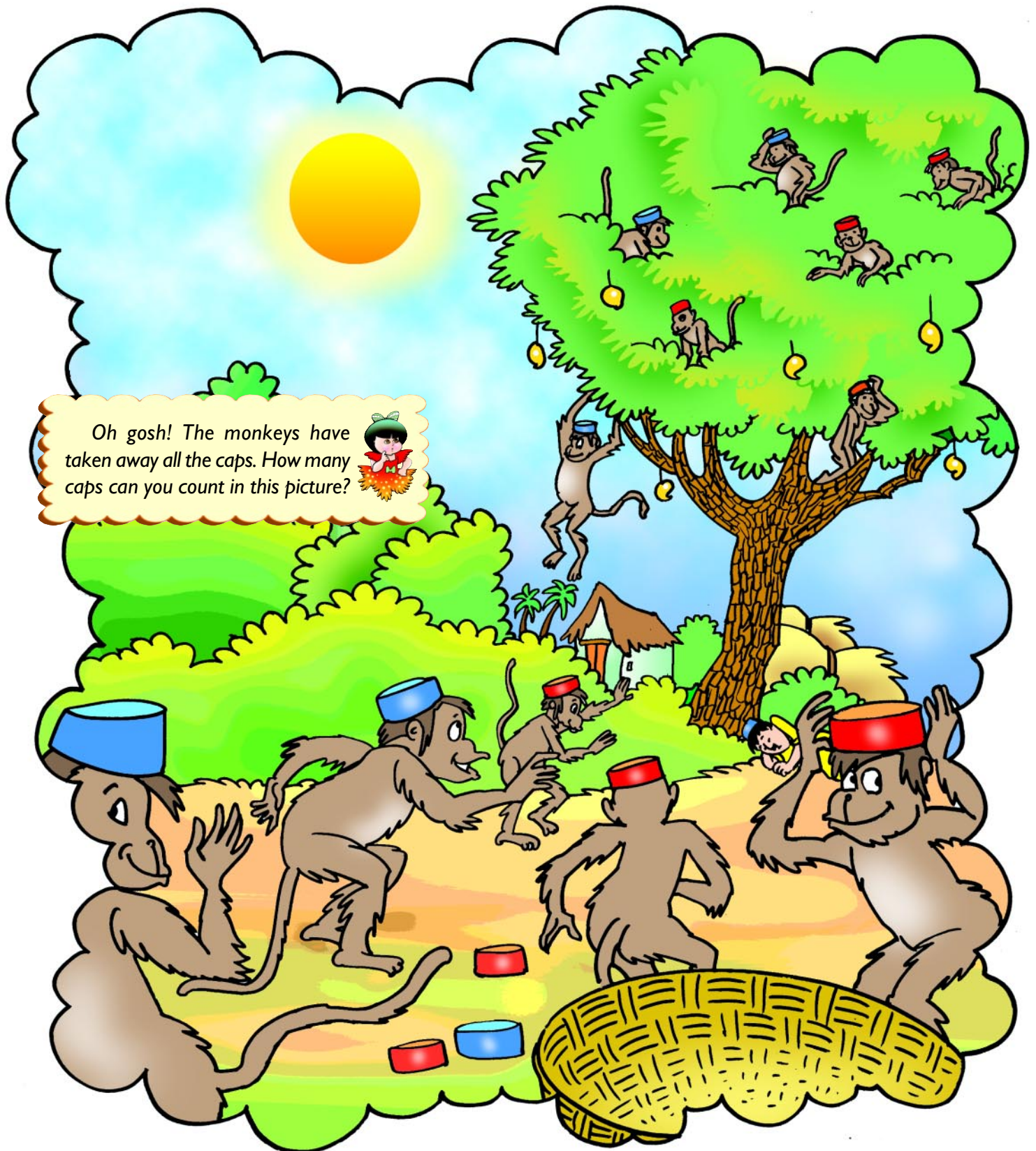
One day, he set out for a faraway village. It was summer, and the day was hot. Topiraj felt very tired after walking for a long time. He saw a huge mango tree. 'I'll rest here for sometime,' he thought. He sat in the cool shade of the tree and put his basket of caps aside. Soon, he was fast asleep.



A troop of monkeys lived on the mango tree. Langur, a young monkey, was the naughtiest of all. As Langur bit into a juicy mango, he noticed the brightly coloured caps in Topiraj's basket. Langur slowly climbed down, took out a cap from the basket, and put it on his head. He was thrilled!



He went up the tree to show the cap to his friends. Moments later, all the monkeys jumped down from the tree one after the other. They grabbed the caps from the basket and put them on their heads. Soon Topiraj's basket was empty.



CHANDAMAMA'S

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्



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National Foundation For India (NFI)

NFI is an independent grant-making organisation established to support development action aimed at the underprivileged in India. The Foundation acknowledges the right of every individual to a life of dignity and self-respect in a just and equitable society. It responds to the need to improve the capacities of individuals and communities, and the quality of their lives, and to challenge social barriers.

Our Programmes

Gender Equity and Justice: The primary focus of the Gender Equity and Justice programme has been around issues of survival and deprivation confronted by the girl child. Issues such as female infanticide, foeticide, and a severe skew in the sex ratio are addressed through community-based initiatives and strategic intervention in policy-making and governance.

Public Affairs and Urban Governance: This programme addresses the need for a system of governance that supports and sustains human development through participatory development, decentralization of power by enabling greater ownership, transparency and accountability, and elimination of poverty. NFI supports initiatives such as report card studies, and training of elected representatives. It has also instituted awards for excellence in local governance.

Remedying Regional Imbalances: The persistent socio-economic imbalances in the North-east have led the Foundation to partner with local NGOs, and support community development programmes on gender, livelihood, and environmental issues. The Foundation also aims at enhancing the capacities and capabilities of local NGOs to tackle developmental problems in their operational areas, enable exchange of information and ideas, and support research and documentation.

Development Communication: The Development Communications programme has evolved from the need to empower communities to use tools of communication to complement existing community level development initiatives. This programme aims at developing focused communication initiatives that go hand in hand with the development interventions of the Foundation. NFI has instituted Media Fellowships and Northeast Media Exchange Programme for journalists for research in / writing on development issues.

NFI Innovations Fund (NIF) : The Foundation started NIF in collaboration with the Centre of Innovations in Voluntary Action (CIVA) of the UK and OXFAM. This fund makes small grants for innovative projects in the areas of health and voluntarism.

More information from : **NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INDIA**

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Dear friends,

Supplement on biodiversity, June 2002

Every year on World Environment Day, which falls on June 5, we sit up and talk about how important it is to protect wildlife and save trees. And later we forget all about it. This year, let it be different. Let's discover the wide and wonderful variety of life in our country – plants, animals, micro-organisms, human life – and their habitats.

To give you a glimpse into this rich variety of life, Chandamama brings *Vasudha*, a supplement on biodiversity. *Vasudha* is sponsored by the National Foundation of India. Its content comes from Kalpavriksh, an environmental action group, and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Vasudha will explain the term biodiversity and why it should be conserved. It will show you some rare, remarkable species of animals and plants, and the mind-boggling range of crops in India. It will introduce you to people who have contributed enormously to conserving biodiversity.

But *Vasudha* cannot be comprehensive. Due to lack of space, we have not been able to deal with all aspects of biodiversity, as we would have liked. For example, you might have to wait for another issue to learn about the life in our waters, or about the different kinds of ecosystems! *Vasudha* does not seek to be comprehensive. We only wish to arouse your interest in biodiversity, and kindle a love for nature. We want you to feel concern for all life and to want to do something about it. Not just talk or write essays on every World Environment Day. Remember, every small drop goes to making a mighty ocean.

With love

Viswam

Viswam

Editor, Chandamama

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Government and biodiversity

The State and Central Governments are responsible for protecting the plants and animal species of India. This is done by declaring their habitats as 'national parks' or 'sanctuaries', where human activities are restricted so that they can live peacefully. There are more than 550 such areas in India, covering almost 5 per cent of its total land. The Wild Life (Protection) Act protects wildlife by prohibiting almost all hunting. There are seed banks and special breeding centres to nurture crop variety and livestock. But despite this, many plants and animals face a serious threat to their existence. The government is realising that it can save biodiversity only if every one of us cooperates ... Would you like to join in? Find out about the protected area nearest you, and how you can help to conserve it...

Creatures big and small

How many kinds of animals and plants can you name? Ten? Fifty? If you can name over 50, you'd be counted as a genius! Yet, did you know that many children who live in India's forests or along its coasts can name more than a hundred, and some, probably a few hundreds? And these children might never have gone to school!

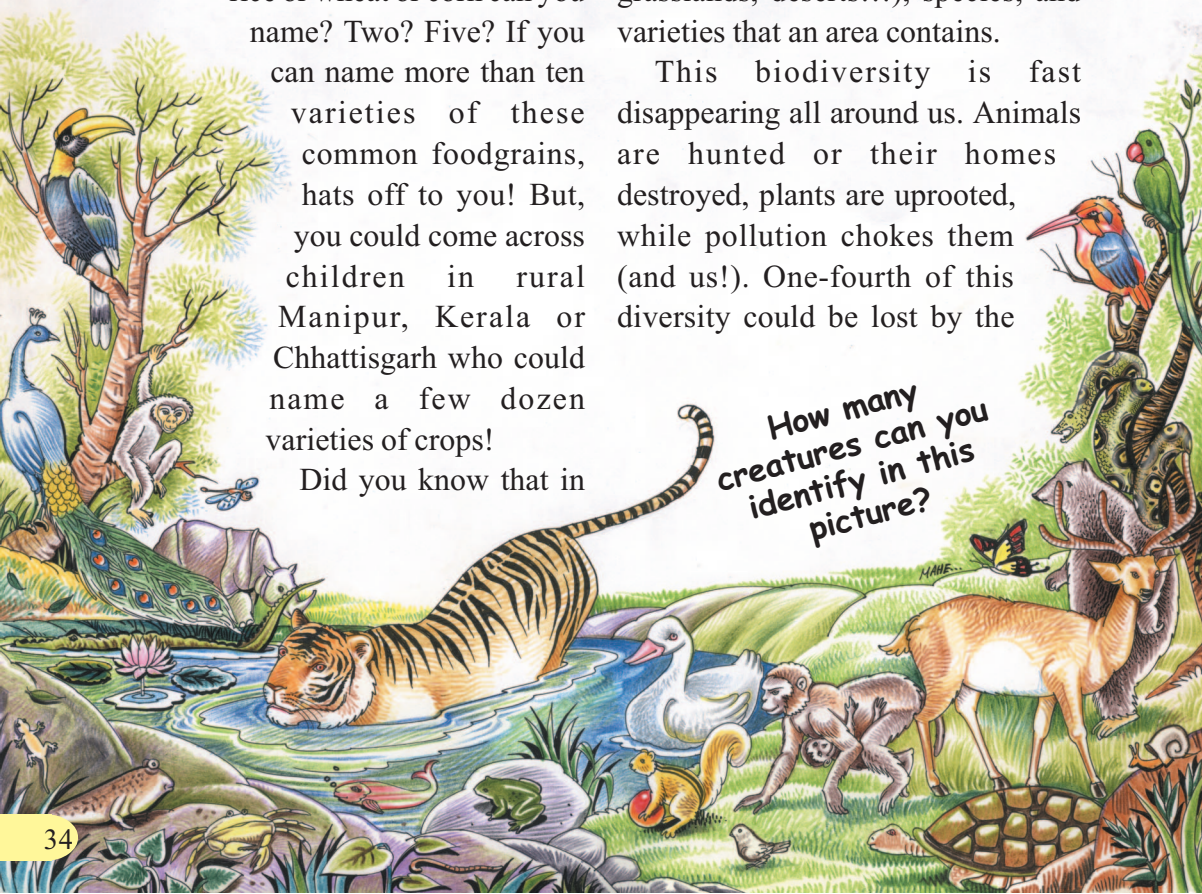
Okay, try this. How many kinds of rice or wheat or corn can you name? Two? Five? If you can name more than ten varieties of these common foodgrains, hats off to you! But, you could come across children in rural Manipur, Kerala or Chhattisgarh who could name a few dozen varieties of crops!

Did you know that in

India alone there are over 125,000 kinds (species) of plants and animals? And many more (especially micro-organisms that are too small to see!) that we have not yet discovered? And this is just a small portion of the world's species which may be more than 500,000 in number! This is part of what is called 'biodiversity', the range of ecosystems (forests, lakes, rivers, coasts, seas, mountains, grasslands, deserts...), species, and varieties that an area contains.

This biodiversity is fast disappearing all around us. Animals are hunted or their homes destroyed, plants are uprooted, while pollution chokes them (and us!). One-fourth of this diversity could be lost by the

How many creatures can you identify in this picture?

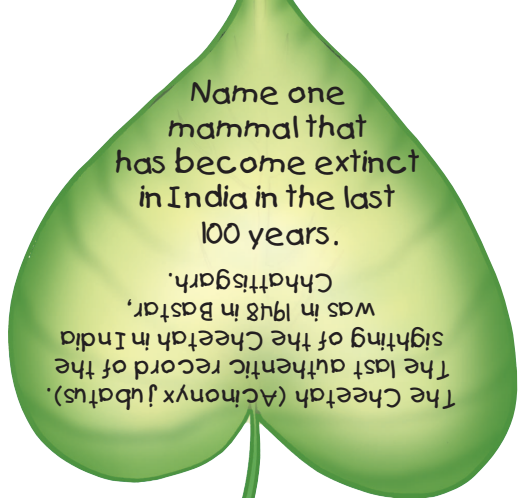


time you grow to your grandparents' age. Who is destroying them? We, who else? Our industries and towns, our desire to consume more and more plastics and paper, junk food, electricity, and what not!

Imagine how boring it would be if we could see around us only human beings! But biodiversity is important for other reasons, too...think of the milk you drink, the cotton clothes you wear, the variety of food you eat, some of the medicines you take, and even the water you use, and the oxygen that you breathe! All this and much more are connected with the complex web of life on earth.

So would you like to do something to save this diversity? Many children have done that - in an ongoing project called the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). This is a Ministry of Environment and Forests project, being coordinated by Kalpavriksh, a 22-year-old environmental action group, and administered by Biotech Consortium India Ltd.

The school children of Vidarbha in



Maharashtra organised an exhibition of products made from plants: agricultural tools, herbal toothbrushes, ropes, and others. Disabled children from Delhi and Chennai participated in a workshop where they emphasised that **all** children must be involved in saving our biodiversity. In Karnataka, children across the State were involved in "biodiversity mapping", listing what plants and animals their villages have.

Thousands of people are involved in the NBSAP process. They are making plans to save what remains of India's biodiversity. And how to ensure that all of us continue to enjoy the gifts of nature.

Now, wouldn't you also like to do something to save the plants and animals around you?

- By Sujatha Padmanabhan
Ashish Kothari

A yellow scroll graphic with a rolled-up end on the left. The text on the scroll reads: "Would you believe that there are 10 billion bacteria in a pinch of soil? How much is one billion? If you could increase the size of your pen cap a billion times you could fit the whole world into it!"

Would you believe that there are 10 billion bacteria in a pinch of soil? How much is one billion? If you could increase the size of your pen cap a billion times you could fit the whole world into it!

Fascinating Flora!

Look at these pictures. They are only 6 of the 47,000 species of plants recorded in India. The pictures of the plants (which have been numbered) and the notes on them (also numbered) are all mixed up. Read the little notes carefully and let's see if you can match them with the right plants!

Have fun!



Lichen

A lichen is an association between an alga and a fungus and the arrangement suits both parties. On its own, the algal part of the lichen would dry up and die soon. The fungal fibres help by saving it from drying up. In return, the algae makes food by photosynthesis and shares it with the fungus which lacks chlorophyll and cannot produce its own food. Lichens are badly affected by pollution, so their absence in an area where they used to occur indicates that air pollution levels in that area have gone up.

B

Kusum Tree

(Schleichera oleosa)

Most of the beautiful flowering trees you see are natives of other lands and cannot support the birds and other creatures found here. However, the Kusum tree is a true-bred native of peninsular India. A medium-sized tree, the Kusum puts out fresh leaves when summer begins. Its leaves are a bright red and you might mistake them for flowers. Old Kusum trees develop hollows in their trunk that become shelters for lizards and other creatures. Birds and squirrels eat the fruits, and the seeds yield useful oil, that is both a mosquito repellent and hair oil. So, the next time you decide to plant a tree, plant a Kusum.



C

Sundew (*Drosera burmani*)

A plant that can move, catch, and eat insects? Sounds unbelievable, but it's true! One of the many insectivorous plants in India is the Sundew. It is a small plant, about as broad as a one rupee coin and the same height. It grows in marshy areas. It gets its name from the many drops of sticky liquid that are present on its leaves. Small insects that land or climb onto it get stuck to the sticky liquid on the leaf, which then slowly folds around and digests the prey.



4



D

Gulvel (*Tinospora cordifolia*)

This medicinal plant is a climber with heart shaped leaves. It grows so extensively that it sometimes covers almost entire trees. It grows in the moderately dry parts almost all over India. Usually, the stem of the plant is cut into pieces and boiled in water and the decoction is used to treat many illnesses and as a tonic. Generally, when the stem of other climbers is cut, the upper part dries up soon. But this climber, when its stem is cut, sends down roots to the ground!

E

Foxtail Orchid (*Rhynchostylus retusa*)

The Foxtail Orchid grows on trees and is found in the humid parts of peninsular and northeast India. In summer it produces a large drooping bunch of pink flowers shaped like a fox's tail. This orchid absorbs water and other nutrients from the air with the help of specially modified thick, green roots that grow over the tree bark on which it grows. Besides using the tree for support, the orchid does not take anything from it or harm it.



5

Text and Pictures : Vivek Gour-Broome

Saving seeds

Anjamma lives in a tiny hut in the small village of Gangwar in Andhra Pradesh. In a corner of her house lie 50 small baskets, each storing the seed of a crop that her family had been cultivating for generations. Rice, mustard, millets, pulses Every year, after the harvest, she chooses the best seeds from the yield and stores them in baskets, between layers of mud, neem leaves, and ash, to keep away pests.

Like Anjamma, many farmers in our country, too, save the best seeds of a crop for future use. If this is not done, some varieties of crops that we have today would die out. What is crop variety? Think of the banana. How

many kinds have you tasted? Very large yellow ones, small yellow ones, green ones, red ones..... that's crop variety! Did you know that India has 16 varieties of potato, 42 kinds of coconut, 124 of ginger, over a thousand varieties of mango, and (hold your breath!) 50,000-60,000 varieties of rice?

And why must we not lose a variety of rice or mango or whatever? A farmer would cite several reasons...

...different varieties require different types of soil and quantities of water; they are harvested at different times of the year (so that some food is available all the time), and they are resistant to different pests. So, when farmers grow more than one variety of a crop, all may not be lost in a year of drought, flood, or pest attack. And often, many varieties are grown for use in festivals, or simply because they taste good!

So, the next time you shop for groceries, vegetables or fruits, thank the millions of farmers like Anjamma who have kept this rich diversity alive!

- By Sujatha Padmanabhan



*The Asiatic Lion
(Panthera leo persica) is
found in ----- in the
State of ----- in India.*

*The Gir National
Park and Sanctuary,
Gujarat.*



Where conservation is a religion

Imagine small herds of graceful blackbucks and chinkaras peacefully grazing alongside cows and buffaloes in the dry and barren desert of Rajasthan? Sounds unreal, but it's true. Thanks to the community of Bishnois, who believe that all living things have a right to live.

It all started in the Nagaur district of Rajasthan with a villager named Jamboji. Born in 1503, Guru Maharaj Jamboji, realised the importance of preserving biodiversity if one had to survive in the arid Thar desert. He started the Bishnoi sect in 1542 and laid down 29 simple rules.

The Bishnois protect all life forms: they even carefully remove insects from dry wood before using it to light a fire! Besides being vegetarians and non-smokers, they do not use even dyes and colours extracted from plants. Bishnoi farmers plough their fields such that it causes the least damage to the ecosystem. They do not rear sheep and goat because these animals eat up the desert vegetation.

Legends speak of their extraordinary love for all forms of life. In 1737, King Abhay Singh of Jodhpur had ordered for a lot of firewood. When his men set about chopping down the *khejri* trees in the region, the Bishnois hugged the trees and refused to let go. The soldiers killed 363 Bishnois before the king came to hear of it and ordered a halt!

The Bishnois can be found in Rajasthan, Haryana, and Punjab.

- By Bina Thomas

You know that the largest Indian land mammal is the Asian Elephant. And the smallest one? It's the Pigmy Shrew, which is as small as an adult's thumb.

THE MOSAIC OF LIFE

A vibrant, stylized illustration titled "THE MOSAIC OF LIFE" depicting a circular path of yellow dots connecting various scenes of human and animal life. The scenes include a river with people, a forest with animals, a village with huts, a boat, a fish market, a net, a bird, a palm tree, a group of people, a bus, a pharmacy, and a tiger. The background is a solid orange color.

Look closely at every image in this picture and you will see how dependent on picture and post it to **The Mosaic of Life Contest, Chandamama India Ltd.**, before June 30. The best two entries

The rebirth of Jardhargaon

Today Vijayji, a much respected village elder of Jardhargaon, decided to go up to the mountain top for his daily walk.

Jardhargaon is located on the mountain slopes in Tehri Garwal district in Uttaranchal State. Vijayji wanted to go into the dense oak and rhododendron forests above the village. As he climbed up, he recollected the struggle his village underwent to bring this forest back to life. He smiled as he remembered the day in 1980 when it all began.

For years before that day, people had been cutting the trees of this forest and selling the timber to outsiders. The Forest Department had shut its eyes to this. So had the villagers, because they no longer considered it *their* forestit had become *sarkari* property long ago.

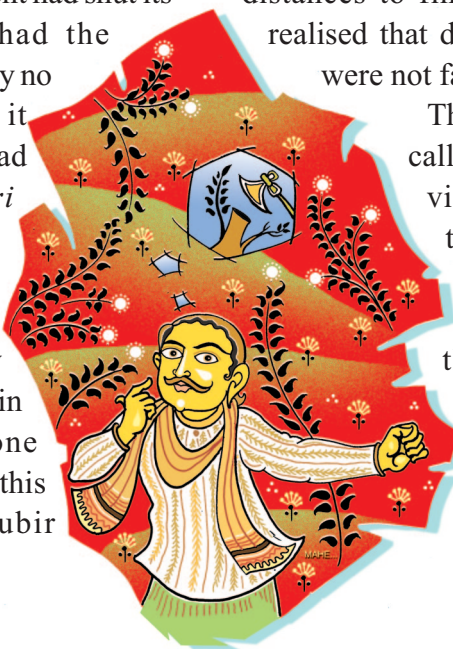
Then Raghubir went and cut what was the only remaining pine tree in the forest. Everyone had had an eye on this tree, but Raghubir

outwitted them by cutting it at night. The furious villagers complained to the forest guard who slapped a heavy fine on Raghubir. In turn, Raghubir said he could identify several villagers who had cut trees before him.

Vijayji saw that this could lead to quarrels among the villagers. He persuaded them to withdraw the complaint against Raghubir.

This incident was an eye-opener. The villagers suddenly woke up to the sad state that Jardhargaon was in. Much of its forest had disappeared. Streams had begun to dry up, and there was little grass left for the cattle. The women had to trudge long distances to find firewood. They realised that drought and hunger were not far behind.

The village headman called a meeting. The villagers concluded that unless they re-grew their forest, their future was threatened. They formed a forest protection *samiti*. Cutting trees was strictly prohibited,



and the use of other forest products was regulated. Parmeshwar and Rannodevi were elected to guard the slopes. Villagers who broke the rules were heavily fined. Parmeshwar used

Did you know that in India there is a very rich tradition of folk medicine practised by tribals and villagers? They use over 4,500 plant species to make around 50,000 kinds of medicines!

Spot the differences



Here's how this village pond looked ten years back...

... and the same scene today...



Can you identify the differences in the two scenes?

his *lathi* to carry out his duties. But it was Rannodevi that the villagers feared. The villagers who strayed into that part of the forest, which was forbidden to them for three months, met with a barrage of stones and curses from her!

As years passed and the slopes became green again, the mountain spring that would dry up in summer began to flow all through the year! There was more grass now and the trees grew, slowly but steadily.

Within a short span of twenty years, a dense forest had grown on the once bare mountain.

Vijayji reached the mountain top and stood, looking around. He heard a tiger roar in the valley deep below. Even the king of the jungle had reappeared, perhaps because he had his home back now. And the villagers knew that they would remain safe from intruders who came to fell trees, as long as the striped *maharaj* was with them. The smile on Vijayji's face became even broader.

- By Roshni Kutty

Wild and Wonderful

Here are a few of the wonderful creatures of the animal kingdom that belong to this country as much as you do. They are only 5 of the 81,000 species of animals recorded in India...

Hoolock Gibbon

(Hylobates hoolock)

This gibbon is found in the rainforests of Northeast India. This endangered animal is India's only true ape. (An ape is a primate without a tail, and is different from monkeys.). The adult male and young female gibbon have a black body, while the adult female is yellowish in colour. The gibbon's arms are longer than its legs. It spends most of its life on trees and moves by swinging from branch to branch. It usually lives in families, and eats fruits, leaves, insects, grubs and spiders. It sips the dew that collects on leaves at dawn.



Abi Tamim

Jewel Beetle

The large jewel beetle has a brightly coloured shiny body. The adult is seen mainly during the monsoon. It is short lived and usually dies at the end of the monsoon after mating, and laying eggs near the roots of young *shirish* trees. On hatching, the larvae feed on the roots and root bark. They take about nine months to develop into adults. The adult beetle feeds on the leaves of the same trees. Tribal people use its bright and shiny wings to make jewels.



Vivek Gour- Broome

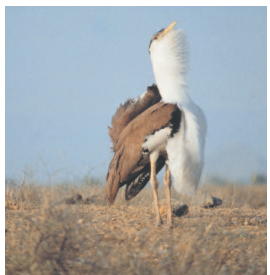
Great Indian Bustard

(*Ardeotis nigriceps*)

What's big, Indian, and rarely seen? It's the Great Indian Bustard, a highly endangered species of birds. It used to be found in most of the drier open parts of India, but is now restricted to less than a tenth of its original

range. It feeds on shoots of vegetation, lizards, grasshoppers, centipedes

and other small creatures. Years of being hunted and the spread of agriculture has resulted in a decline in its numbers. Now the bustard is found in western and central India, but is rarely seen in the wild.



Asad Rahmani/Sanctuary Photolibrary



Vivek Gour-Broome

Leatherback Turtle

(*Dermochelys coriacea*)

This magnificent creature is the largest marine turtle in the world. Unlike other turtles, this one does not have a hard shell. Its carapace, or the upper part of the shell, is more like thick leather. It swims well and spends its life out at sea. It feeds mainly on jellyfish. The female comes once a year, to the beaches in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and parts of Southeast Asia, to lay its eggs. The number of the leatherback has dwindled drastically because of hunting, getting entangled in fishing nets, and disturbance on the beaches.

Coral

The coral is a group of tiny animals called polyps that lives in seawater and feeds on zooplankton. The polyps make their own protective covering or skeleton of calcium carbonate that they draw from the seawater. A coral reef is a colony of different kinds of corals with their skeletons. It



Pankaj Sekhsaria


is home to hundreds of sea creatures. The living coral is usually in bright shades of blue, green, brown and yellow. They are usually found in crystal clear shallow tropical waters. There are wonderful coral reefs in Lakshadweep, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

- By Vivek Gour-Broome

Biodiversity and you

What we do every day at school and home, or when out on a holiday, could affect plants and animals both close to us and far away. For example, many city dwellers now want marble or granite floors for their houses. Agreed, these floors look lovely. But remember, marble and granite are mined often after destroying forests and the animals in them.

In the questions below, choose one of the two options. Mark yourself with the help of the scoring guidelines given and find out how biodiversity-friendly you are! The information that follows will explain the impact of our regular activities on the environment.

- 
1. When you plan to be out of your house for long, do you
 - (a) buy bottled water or soft drinks in tetrapacks when you are thirsty?
 - (b) carry a water bottle or drink tender coconut water, lime juice or buttermilk in glasses?
 2. Do you enjoy playing
 - a) outdoor games that only need mechanical (your own) energy?
 - b) with hand held electronic games that run on battery?
 3. Do you wear
 - a) dresses made of polyester, terrycotton or nylon?
 - b) cotton clothes?
 4. Do you usually go to school by
 - a) car or private vehicle?
 - b) walking, cycling or taking a bus?
 5. When you write a letter to your friend do you use
 - a) only one side of the paper?
 - b) write on both sides?

Scoring : *Here are the biodiversity-friendly answers to the questions, along with reasons why the other option is not. For every biodiversity-friendly option you've practised, give yourself 10 points, otherwise deduct 10 points from your score. If you've scored 50 points, you're a REAL PAL of plants and animals! If you've scored anything below 40, you've got to change your lifestyle, friends, before you can be called biodiversity-friendly!*

Parrots are not found in India. True or false?

True. India has only parakeets.

Answers :

1. **b.** Branded water is usually sold in plastic bottles and pouches, which are non-biodegradable. Plastic waste may be mistaken for food and eaten by mammals, birds or fish. For example, turtles eat thin plastic taking them to be jellyfish, and die a painful death. Tetrapacks have an outer layer of thick paper, and an inner layer of thin aluminium. We cut trees to make paper, and also destroy forests to mine bauxite used for making aluminium. When discarded, the aluminium foil does not degrade into the soil.
2. **a.** Batteries contain lead, which when discarded affects animals. Excess lead in humans can affect mental growth, lead to nervous disorders and even

high blood pressure, and so imagine its effect on smaller creatures! In India batteries are not systematically disposed.

3. **b.** Polyester and other artificial fibres are petroleum products. While drilling for petroleum, we destroy forests or marine life depending on where the oil reserve is located.
4. **b.** When you use public transport there are many people using the same vehicle. Thus, you save fuel and pollute the air less than if you use private transport.
5. **b.** Trees are cut to make paper. By using only one side of paper, we use more of it and indirectly contribute to loss of forests and, therefore, of homes of animals and plants.

- By Shantha Bhushan



Answers to puzzles

Creatures big and small : Great hornbill, peacock, dragonfly, rhinoceros, tiger, crocodile, lizard, mudskipper, crab, fish, frog, swan, squirrel, sparrow, monkey, turtle, snail, deer, bear, butterfly, python, kingfisher, parakeet, earthworm, tree, lotus, grass, money plant.

Fascinating Flora : A-3, B-5, C-2, D-1, E-4

Spot the differences : Missing beehive, fewer birds, dead fish, tree stump, building replacing hut, woman throwing garbage into the river, fewer flowers on the bush.

Match 'em : 1-D, 2-A, 3-B, 4-C

Dyeing can be fun!

*Hey, don't dye your old cotton clothes with chemicals anymore!
Be a trendsetter! Make and use vegetable dyes to colour your clothes,
scarves, and cloth bags. Don't try to dye synthetic material.
Start with an old white or faded cotton towel.*

Take two or three medium-sized beetroots and chop them into pieces. Put them into a pan and pour water into it till the pieces are submerged. Light a stove with someone's help and place the pan on it. When the water turns red, remove the pan from the fire. Strain out the water. Your dye is ready. (Save the beetroot slices for a spicy salad!) Now, put the pan back on the fire and let the water simmer. Put the towel into the pan and keep stirring with a clean stick or spoon. Switch off the stove when the towel turns the shade of pink you want. Leave it overnight in the water.

For the colour to be fast, add some vinegar to the water.

Besides beetroot, you could use flowers like the hollyhock and shoe flower for red, spinach for green, *mahua* for yellow, *amla* or gooseberry fruit, dried and boiled, for black or brown.

Collect flowers like the *aparajita*, *mandar*, *jacaranda* and *sinduvaram*, and leaves like *mehendi* and dry them to make "anytime" dyes. Dry them in the shade so that the colour doesn't fade. So, the next time you need a dye, all you need to do is soak them overnight in water!

– By Shruti Devi

Name the movement in the 1970s in the Himalayan region of India where people hugged trees to prevent them from being cut.

The Chipko Movement

– Compiled by
Seema Bhatt



Celebrating 10 years of National Foundation For India (NFI)



Released by
Ms. Susan Beresford,
President, Ford
Foundation, on the
occasion of the tenth
year celebration.

"I must compliment NFI on both the quality of production and the selection of authors (not including myself) I can't remember seeing anything else as good on civil society in India. May be NFI could think of doing this again..."

- Sundar Burra
Advisor SPARC,
Mumbai

"It is a most useful and interesting compilation..."

- Ashish Kothari,
Coordinator, NBSAP

"...found the articles quite relevant and thought provoking..."

- Deep Joshi,
PRADAAN

"...is an outstanding collection of writers — a fitting way to celebrate the completion of NFI's 10 years of working..."

- Neelima Khaitan,
Seva Mandir

A Common Cause brings onto a single platform, views from varied quarters on the role of the voluntary sector and concerns for its future. Grassroots workers, leaders of movements, founders of NGOs, programme managers of funding agencies, keen observers from the state, and intellectuals share their observations and reflections on diverse aspects of voluntary action. The essays reflect the urgent need to uncover and share the dilemmas and constraints of working towards egalitarian and democratic agendas. It is hoped that **A Common Cause** will not just provide food for thought, but also initiate some dialogue on the concerns of the voluntary sector in India.

For copies contact :

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BHARAT RATNA C. SUBRAMANIAM

Fellowships for Community Leadership
and Sustainable Livelihoods

The National Foundation for India has instituted the Bharat Ratna C. Subramaniam Fellowships for Community Leadership and Sustainable Livelihoods in honour of its Founder-Chairman, Shri C. Subramaniam.

These annual fellowships are of two kinds: Fellowship to Voluntary Sector Workers and Fellowship for Community Level Leadership.

Four Fellowships, worth Rs. 1 lakh each, are awarded every year, two in each category. These fellowships are supported by the Ford Foundation.

Voluntary sector workers selected for the Fellowships will be placed in premier institutions where they can interact with activists and academics involved with food and livelihood security. The Fellowships will provide them with an opportunity to hone their skills and leadership qualities, as well as deepen their understanding of sustainable livelihoods.

The Fellowship for Community Level Leadership will support voluntary organisations to run their own leadership development programmes for community level workers. It will focus on skill and technological empowerment, and conservation and optimum utilization of locally available natural resources such as land, water, and forests.

Eligibility :

- Mid career voluntary sector workers
- Women, especially those with interest in food and livelihood security
- Community leaders with experience in sustainable livelihoods

Applications must be accompanied by :

- a brief curriculum vitae
- a small write up on past work done
- a proposal outlining the specific area of work that the applicant would like to pursue with the fellowship grant

For further details, contact :

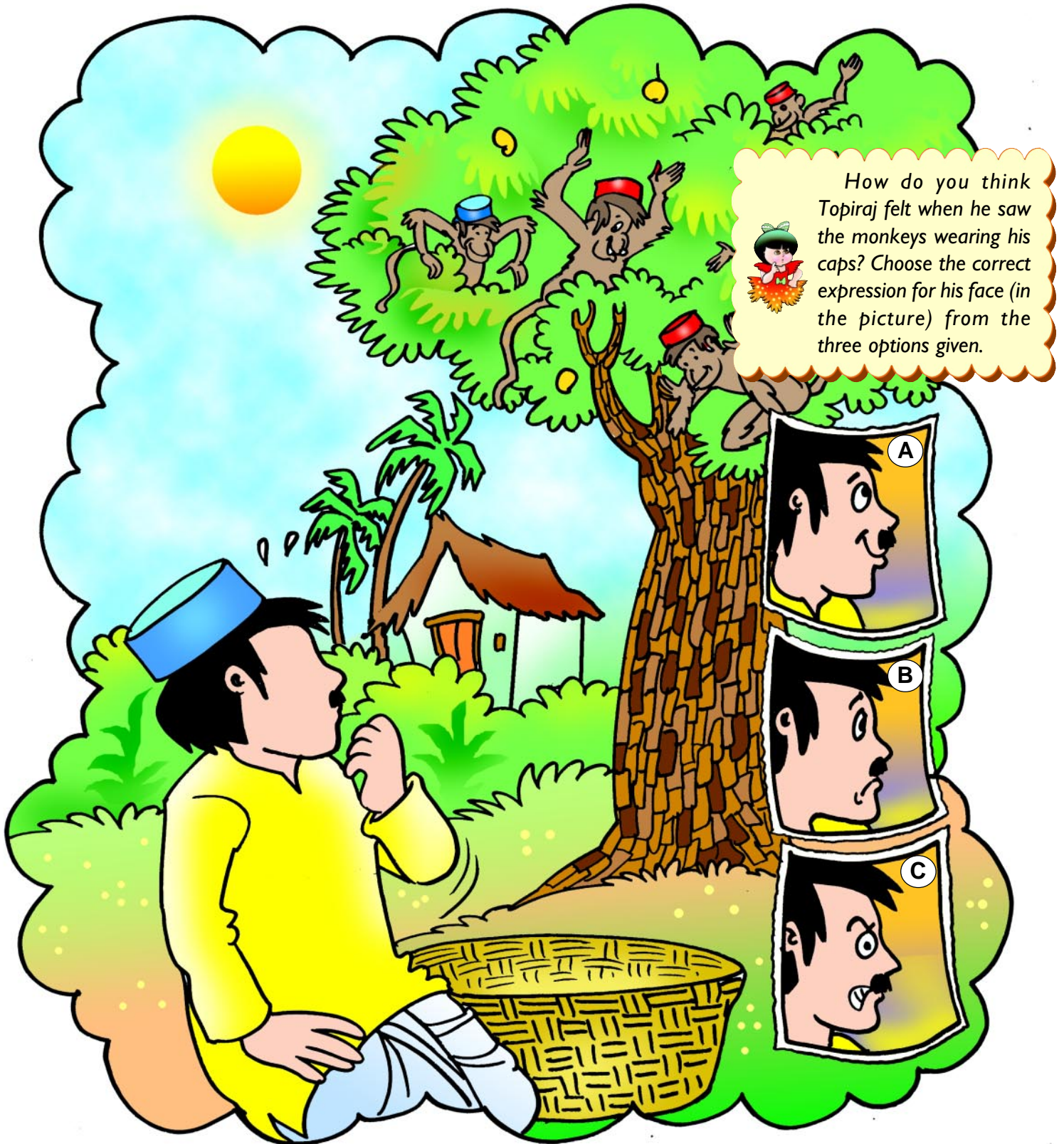
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Topiraj woke up after a while. He was surprised when he saw the empty basket. Who would have taken the caps? He stood up and looked around. He then saw the monkeys with caps on their heads. They were giggling. Topiraj was puzzled. How could he get back his caps from them?



Topiraj remembered what his grandfather had once told him. One day, his grandfather was resting under a tree with his basket of caps. A troop of monkeys had taken away all the caps. He had then used a clever trick to get the caps back from them. He knew that monkeys imitate all that men do. So he took off his own cap and threw it down. The monkeys immediately threw their caps down, too. Topiraj smiled and said to himself: 'Ah! I'll try the same trick!'



Topiraj recalls what his grandfather had told him when he was a little boy. Can you draw the scene described by Topiraj's grandfather?



Topiraj looked up and yelled at the monkeys. They chattered back at him. He made faces at them, they made faces at him. He threw a stone high in the air. The monkeys threw mangoes high in the air. He took his cap from his shirt pocket and put it on his head. The monkeys watched him quietly. He took off his cap and they did the same.



'And now...,' thought Topiraj and threw the cap down on the ground. He waited for the monkeys to throw down their caps. But they did not do so! 'What happened?' Topiraj wondered. As he sat scratching his head, Langur came down the tree and patted his shoulder, "You're not the only one who had a grandfather, Topiraj. I had one, too. My grandfather had told me how he was fooled by your grandfather. And he had warned us not to be fooled again!" Poor Topiraj left the place, crestfallen.



Here are some of Langur's cousins. Do you know their names?

- Answers to Junior Chandamama activities :
1. Cap maker, potter, vegetable seller,
 2. a bunny!
 3. fisherman, farmer.
 4. 16 caps
 5. C.
 7. Topiraj has a hat, and not cap, in hand, the size and shape of his basket, bananas on a mango tree, moon and stars in daytime.
 8. A. Orangutan B. Macaque C. Proboscis monkey

Write to the Prime Minister !

*If **Vasudha** has inspired in you a concern for conservation of biodiversity, please sign and send this letter to Act for Vasudha, **Chandamama India Limited**, 82 Defence Officers' Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai: 600 097. We shall forward all your letters to our Prime Minister for action.*

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

As young citizens of India who look forward to an active and healthy future, we are much concerned about the increasing use of toxic materials in our daily lives. Our parents and grandparents lived a simple and safe life. But we, today's children, are constantly urged through advertisements and other means, to use products that are dangerous to the health of people, animals, plants, and the earth.

We appeal to you to:

1. Take every step possible to stop the production and use of toxic materials, such as chemical dyes, pesticides, chemical fertilisers, plastics like PVCs and carry bags, those used in food products like colours, preservatives and synthetic flavours, and others.

2. Promote the use of alternatives, such as cloth bags, plant-based dyes and colours, manure and plant-based pesticides, and other similar products that are safe for us and our fellow creatures.

In turn, **we pledge** to stop using toxic products, and instead use only ecologically safe alternatives in our daily life. We shall also motivate our family members and friends to do the same.

Mr. Prime Minister, we trust that you will act to save our future, and that of the millions of plants and animals that inhabit the earth.

We hope to hear from you about this.

Yours sincerely and with hope,

(Signature of the reader)

Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Class:** _____

Address: _____

That's science for you!

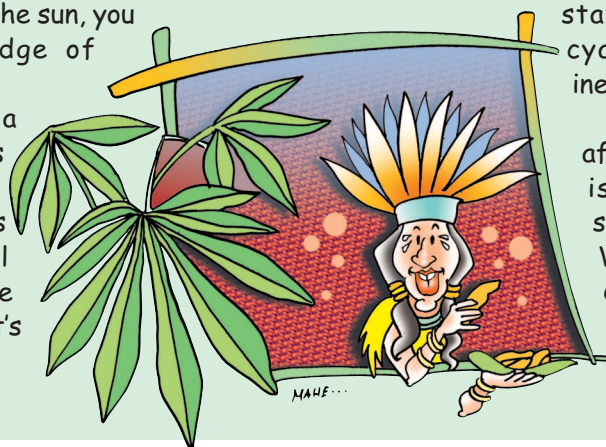
Science is older than the hills. Don't think science is computers and space technology alone. When you put wet clothes out to dry in the sun, you are applying your knowledge of science!

Mankind has always had a scientific bent of mind. Here's a fact to show you that.

Almost ten thousand years ago, the people of Central America used the tubers of the cassava plant for food. So what's

surprising about it, you may say. Well, chew this: the tubers of the cassava plant are poisonous in the raw state. They contain a kind of cyanide which makes them inedible.

But the tubers can be eaten after removing the poison, which is usually done by grating, squeezing and heating them. Which is what the Indians of Central America did. But how did they discover this?



A sage comes to the rescue of gods and men



Long, long ago, a demon named Vrittasura grew extremely ambitious; so much that he desired to become the monarch of all the three worlds – the heavens, the earth, and the nether world or *Patala*. Indra, the king of gods, had to wage a long battle with him. At last, the demon was killed but, alas, peace did not come in spite of that.

That was because a horde of demons, known as the Kalakeyas, who owed allegiance to Vrittasura, continued to harass the gods as well as the human beings. How was it that while their mighty leader could be vanquished, these demons escaped death? As Vrittasura died, these demons fled. Nobody knew where they went. At first it was thought that they had retired to some remote mountains or forests and would never dare to disturb anybody again. But such a hope was belied before long. They would suddenly attack a locality at night and destroy all the houses and massacre the residents. They particularly targeted the pious and the innocent, and sages. Which shows that these demons were wicked by nature. Their pleasure lay in troubling, tormenting, and killing people. They could not destroy the gods, true, but

they did not leave them in peace.

Kings and heroes tried to check the mischief of the Kalakeyas. But try as they might, they were unable to locate the demons. The terrible creatures would spring a surprise on a town or a village. Before the people could organize any resistance or even know who attacked them, their homes would go up in flames. They would hear blood-curdling shouts and yells and see the fearful demons chasing them. Very few could escape the attackers, for the demons were swift, ruthless, and awfully strong.

By the time it was daybreak, the wicked horde was nowhere to be seen. Soldiers of the kings spread out everywhere in search of them, but in vain.

Could they clean disappear into thin air? All were left bewildered.

At last the mystery was solved. These demons had the uncanny capacity to hide deep in the sea. After doing their mischief on the earth, they would make a beeline to the sea and plunge into it. They were quite at home in the water.

But what if the people were to discover their hiding place? Who could confront them deep under the water?

There was only one person who could do something about it – the gods were told.

He was sage Agastya, about whom you have already read earlier. He had come over from the north of India down to the south, crossing the Vindhya. There was a special reason for his doing so. The high Vindhya mountain had grown angry with the Sun. It wanted to block the Sun's passage from the east to the west. In order to achieve this end, it began growing taller and taller. Gods and sages appealed to the Vindhya to stop doing so, but it paid no heed to them.

The great mountain, however, was a disciple of Agastya. The gods requested the sage to check his disciple from disturbing the routine of such celestial bodies, like the sun or the moon.

Agastya did something novel. He walked towards the mountain. It bowed down to him. Agastya blessed it and said, "Remain like this till I return!"

There was no question of the mountain disobeying its Guru's command. But the Guru never returned; he made the southern part of the country his dwelling place! Thus, the Vindhya mountain continues to keep its head bowed. The Sun's passage from the east to the west remains free from any obstacle.

Once again did the gods approach the great sage. "Kindly help us put an end to the menace that the Kalakeyas have turned out to be," they pleaded. The sage nodded and walked towards the sea. Gods, kings, and heroes followed him. The sage reached the seashore and stood still. What was he

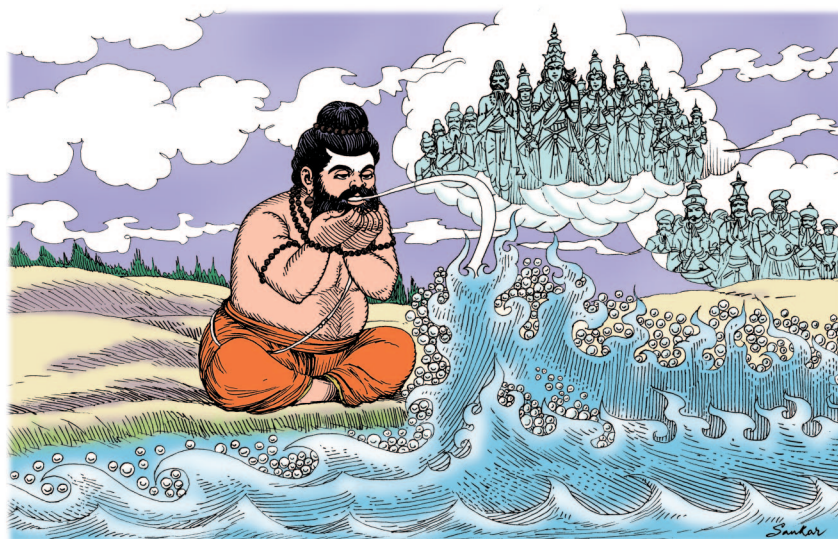


going to do? Nobody could guess.

He concentrated for a while. Then he put forth his arms and cupped his palms. Lo and behold, the sea started leaping into his palms in jets. And what did the sage do after that? He put his mouth into his cupped palms and simply drank up the water. The sea dried up in no time. The demons were exposed! Needless to say, it was easy thereafter for the gods to fight them to the finish!

In conclusion, we should tell you something important. Those who have studied the Indian myths tell us that these stories have an inner meaning. The sea stands for consciousness. Could it be that the sage drinking up the sea which led to the destruction of the demons mean his mastering his consciousness and removing all that was against its progress? For the time being, you know the story. Maybe, in due course of time, you will feel more interested in it, will meditate on it and find the truth that remains hidden in this as well as the other stories of this type.

- Vindusar



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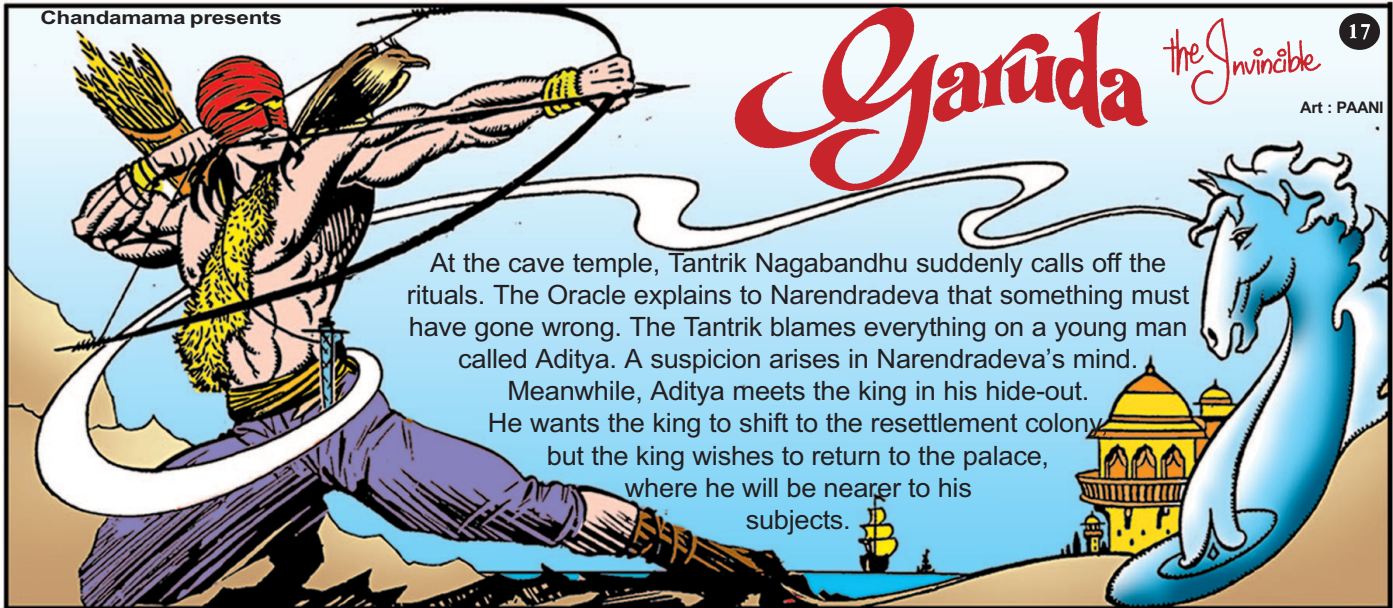
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At the cave temple, Tantrik Nagabandhu suddenly calls off the rituals. The Oracle explains to Narendradeva that something must have gone wrong. The Tantrik blames everything on a young man called Aditya. A suspicion arises in Narendradeva's mind.

Meanwhile, Aditya meets the king in his hide-out.

He wants the king to shift to the resettlement colony

but the king wishes to return to the palace,

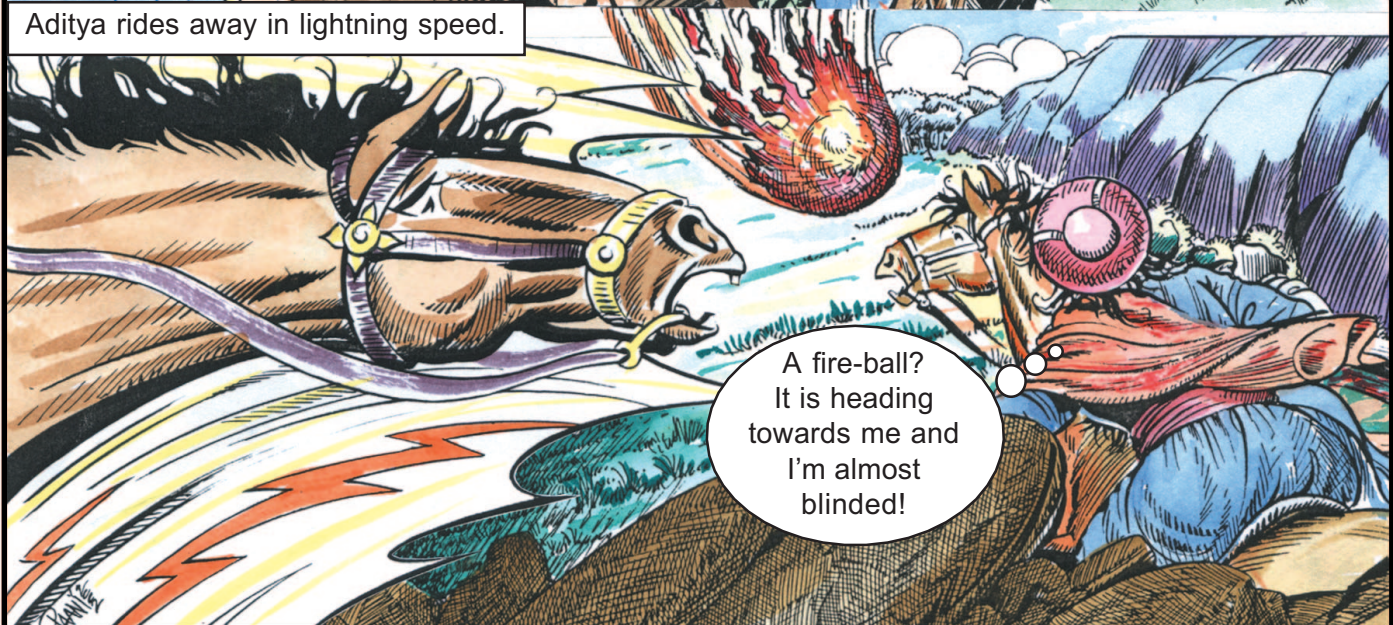
where he will be nearer to his

subjects.

Before mounting his horse, Aditya gives instructions to Ram Singh and Aruna.

Aruna will travel with the king. Post your men along the route to prevent Ravindradeva's soldiers from disturbing the king's safe passage.

Aditya rides away in lightning speed.



A fire-ball?
It is heading
towards me and
I'm almost
blinded!

The object suddenly splits and engulfs the horse and its rider. Aditya is thrown over.

What's this!
I'm not on the
ground! It looks as
though I'm suspended!
Am I floating?

Ah! It's now
a luminous figure!
Garuda!

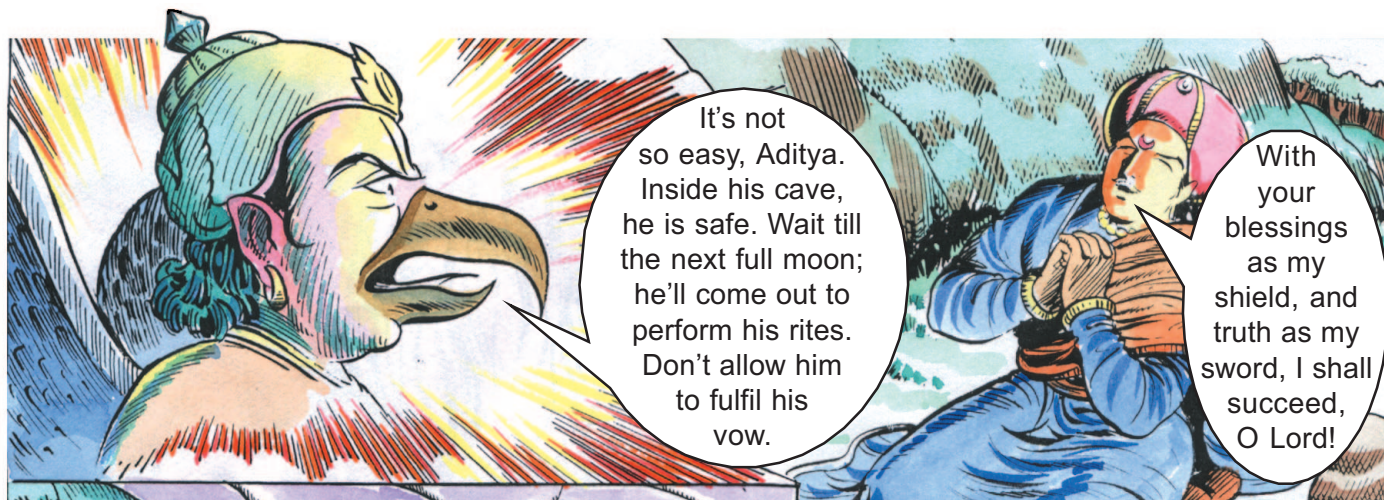
Could it be that
I'm being covered
by His power?

A mighty image of Garuda
appears before him.

Listen,
my son!
Tantrik
Nagabandhu
is evil personified.
Destroy him before
he sacrifices his
60th victim
in the next
forty days!

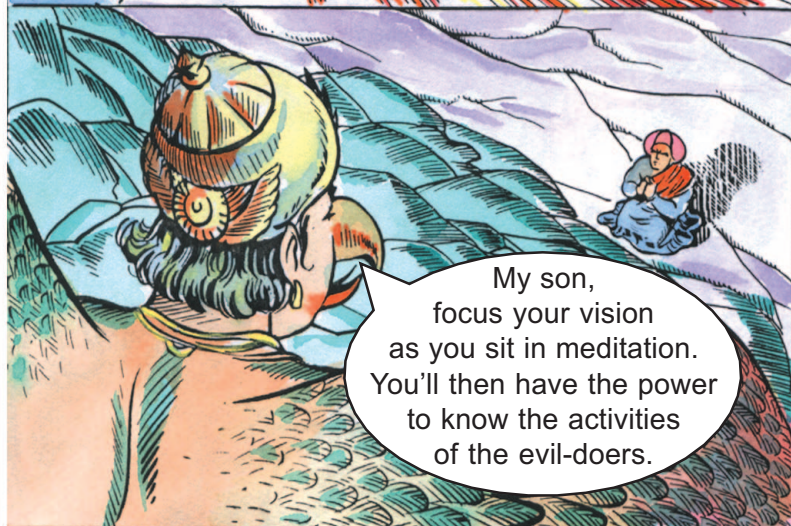
Whenever
you feel my
presence in you,
no harm will
come to you!

Lead me
to the Tantrik,
O Lord! I shall
destroy him.



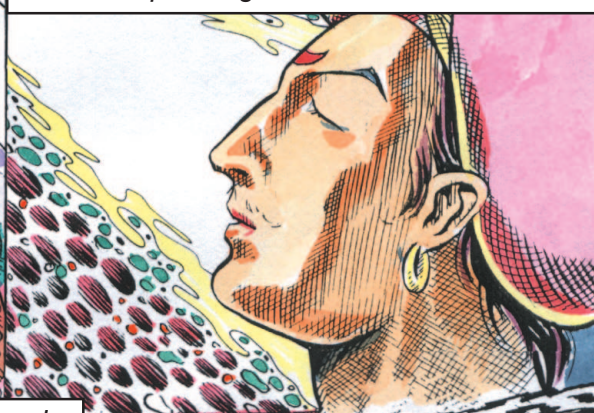
It's not so easy, Aditya. Inside his cave, he is safe. Wait till the next full moon; he'll come out to perform his rites. Don't allow him to fulfil his vow.

With your blessings as my shield, and truth as my sword, I shall succeed, O Lord!



My son, focus your vision as you sit in meditation. You'll then have the power to know the activities of the evil-doers.

As the giant Garuda disappears from his presence, Aditya meditates on how he would utilise the power given to him.



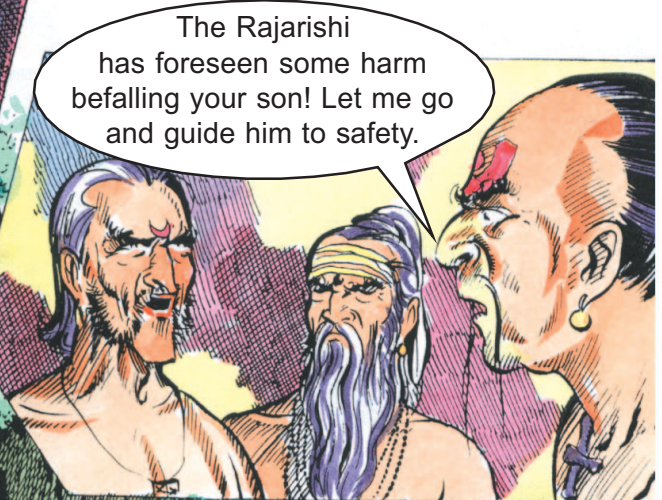
At the cave temple, Nagabandhu sends for the Oracle and Narendradeva in the middle of the night.

I had a strange dream... of a young man... he would be the final offering to my Master.

Your son's life is in danger. Ask him to leave the kingdom before this young man reaches the palace.



The Oracle notices the puzzled look on Narendradeva.



The Oracle leaves for Chandini accompanied by two disciples of the Tantrik.



Nagabandhu now turns to Narendradeva.



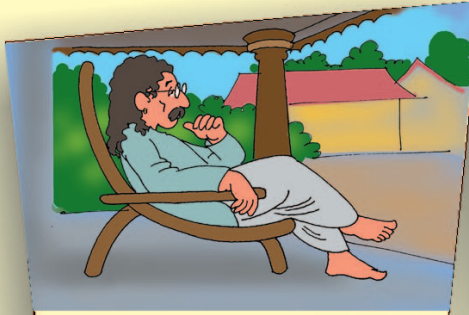
The Tantrik stops Narendradeva.

Your plot to overthrow the king will not succeed. You and your son must stay away from the kingdom till I complete my vow. Remember, we have a common enemy to destroy. Garuda! You may leave now.

To continue

MEN OF WIT

GOPAL BHAND



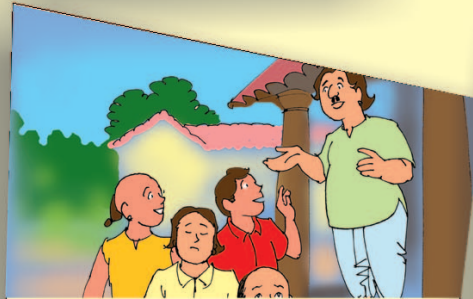
Moni Babu was one of the richest men in Krishnanagar. He was the most miserly, too. He never oiled his hair which always looked dishevelled. He wore a dhoti, which he would wash only once a week. He looked dirty, and no one wanted to befriend him.



It was festival time. A group of children went to him for a donation. "You want money for crackers?" he shouted at them. "That's mere waste of money! Go away!" The children went away disappointed.



On the way, they met Gopal Bhand. They narrated their experience. "Everybody in the locality has given us donations. Can't he give at least fifty rupees?" they poured out their woe.



"Moni Babu is a miser, don't you know that?" Gopal Bhand pulled up the children, but wished to help them. And if he could teach a lesson or two to Moni Babu, he would be all the more happy. "Come back in the evening. I'll get a hundred rupees from him."



Moni Babu was busy plucking vegetables from his garden. He hurriedly hid them as he saw Gopal Bhand coming. "I'm on a fast, I'll eat only at night." "You may save the vegetables for your dinner; but think of the money you're wasting!" Gopal countered.



"Me? Wasting money?" Moni Babu looked surprised. "You light a lamp to receive a visitor, but blow it off when he sits down," remarked Gopal. "Why should we see each other's face when we talk?" Moni Babu argued.



"If so, why should you wear clothes when you sit in the dark? There'll be less wear and tear," said Gopal. "Can you see with one eye?" "Of course, I can!" replied Moni Babu. "Ah! You're wasting money, wearing a pair of glasses!" remarked Gopal. Moni Babu thought Gopal was cleverer than he had taken him to be.



"All right, tell me, Gopal, what are you aiming at?" Moni Babu stared at his face. "Simple. By not spending money, you're only wasting it! Let our children enjoy the festival," said Gopal. Looking ashamed, Moni Babu held out a hundred rupee note. He had at last caught the point.



Freedom for a phantom!

was quite heavy. The ghost cleverly deduced that the man was a thief and he had come into the jungle to hide the booty that he had stolen in the night!

The thief dragged his bag to the banyan tree and taking out a spade, he began to dig. The ghost watched him with interest. Soon the hole was big enough for the bag. He pushed it in, covered it up and then smoothened out the top. No one would have guessed that a treasure was lying buried underneath the banyan tree. Satisfied with his work, the thief left the forest.

The huge forest was full of lush green trees. As the sun rose, the air was filled with the chirping of the birds, which had built their nests in the forest. This sweet commotion was enough to wake up anyone, even the ghost who had made his home in an ancient banyan tree. Hearing the morning song of the birds, he rubbed his eyes and peered out of his tree.

‘These birds do make beautiful music, but I wish I could sleep just a wee bit more. I’m so tired after staying awake late last night,’ he mumbled to himself. Anyway, he reluctantly woke up and called out a ‘good morning’ to the owl next door.

Suddenly all the birds in the nearby trees stopped singing and flew up into the air in fright. Someone was coming into the forest in a hurry. The ghost frowned. Who could it be? Soon he saw a man coming up, lugging a big bag behind him. He was panting and gasping for breath. Obviously, the bag

The thief repeated this week after week. Soon there was quite a big treasure buried under the ghost’s tree. One day, the ghost had an idea: ‘This thief takes such pains to keep his goods safe. Isn’t there anything I can do to help him?’

He came up with a plan. ‘If I block the way to this tree with stones, surely no one can get at this treasure.’ So saying, the ghost collected several big boulders and stones and piled them up around the tree trunk.

Some days later, a hermit who used to pass through the forest regularly, came walking by. All the birds and animals greeted him. Feeling tired, he headed for the banyan tree, which was his favourite spot. Every time he passed through the forest, he would take a little nap under the banyan.

But this time, when he came to the banyan tree, he was surprised to find boulders and stones strewn all around it. He could not lie down in the shade of the tree now.

The hermit looked around and angrily asked, 'Why are there stones all around? Who's responsible for this?'

The ghost came out of the banyan tree and said, 'I did it, holy hermit. I wanted to do something to help the thief who buries his booty here. Now it is safe, you see.' The hermit did not seem very impressed with the ghost's helpful deed.

"Do you think that helping a thief is a noble deed? Only a ghost can be sympathetic towards a thief," he said. "Your thoughtless act deserves to be punished."

And before the ghost could plead for pardon, the hermit chanted a *mantra* and the ghost found that he was stuck to the banyan tree! "O holy hermit! Pardon me! Please release me," he yelled and pleaded. His pleas rang out in the forest. He sounded so pitiful that the hermit relented and turning back, he said, "You'll be free from your bondage only when some kindly human removes the stones around the tree." He then marched away, still in a huff.

Days passed by. Night after night, day after day, the forest echoed with the cries of the ghost who would cry out to passers-by: "Please help me! Please set me free! Help!" No one heeded his cries and many were frightened by his eerie, piping shrieks.

Then one day, a poor man had compassion in him. He agreed to remove the stones scattered around the tree. Overjoyed with the man's cooperation, the ghost said, "O good friend, thank you for your help. I, too, would like to give you something in return

for your favour. Dig under the tree and you'll find a treasure."

The kindly man removed all the stones and dug under the tree. To his astonishment, he came upon the great treasure buried there. "I cannot thank you enough, O ghost. This is worth much more than the favour I've done for you," he exclaimed with joy and gratitude. He brought a cart and took the entire treasure home.

When the ghost was alone again, he looked all around him and something seemed to be missing. 'How nice it would be to have the tree all to myself again,' he thought. 'Now that the stones have been removed, some tired traveller may want to rest under this tree for a while. Or picnickers may decide to relax here and they may litter the place. Why should I share my home with others?'

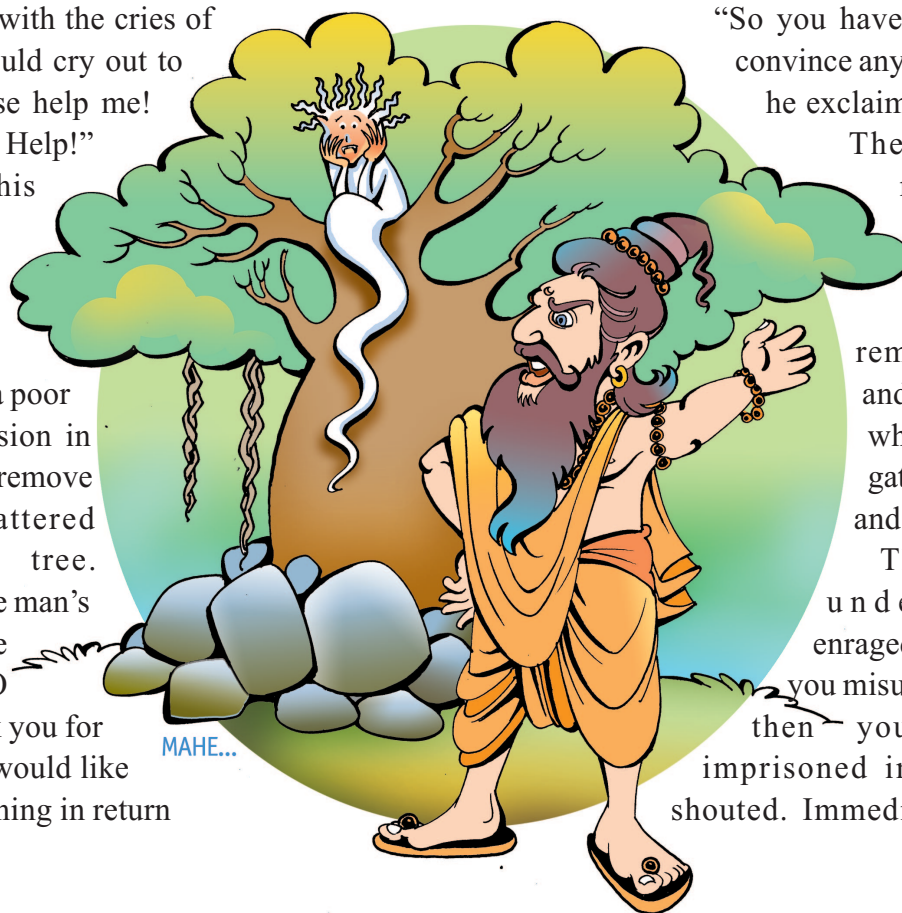
So it collected the stones again and promptly blocked the way to the tree!

A year later, the hermit was passing through the forest again. He was surprised to see the rocks and boulders still around the tree. He assumed that the ghost was still imprisoned in the tree.

"So you haven't been able to convince anyone to help you," he exclaimed.

The ghost did not recognise the hermit. He explained, "A poor man did remove the stones and set me free. But when I was free, I gathered them again and piled them up!"

The hermit was understandably enraged. "If this is how you misuse your freedom, then you are better imprisoned in the tree," he shouted. Immediately the ghost



MAHE...

found that he was stuck to the tree!

The angry hermit was walking away quickly. Coming to his senses, the ghost pleaded with the hermit to release him.

"Please forgive me, holy sage! I realise that I have done wrong. I'll not repeat it. Please release me," he begged, pleaded, and shouted in vain. The hermit left without a backward glance. He did not give the ghost any way of freeing himself.

Could this be the end of the story? No! Well, as the story goes, the hermit, who really was quite soft hearted, did not condemn the ghost to stay tied to the tree eternally. In his mind of minds, he decided that the ghost would be set free when someone removed the stones around the tree again!

Remember the poor man who had helped the ghost? He had become rich with the wealth the ghost had given him. He wished to build a temple near the banyan tree which had proved so lucky to him.

Yes! The first stones he moved to the temple site were from around the banyan tree! The ghost was



free again. Though he valued his freedom, the ghost was not happy about the temple being built so near his home. He glided away in search of another cosy home in the forest.



Great Laughs!

Ravi: Are you positive?

Rakesh: No, only fools are positive.

Ravi: Are you sure?

Rakesh: I am positive.



Doctor: I think you may have rabies.

Patient: Well, doctor, can you give me a paper and pen?



Doctor: Why, do you want to make your will?

Patient: No. I want to make a list of people I want to bite.



What is it that you can keep after giving it to someone else?



What gets wet when drying?



What is the fastest way to make soup taste terrible?



What is the best way to double a rupee?



What loses its head every morning but gets it back at night?



How do you keep a dog off the road?

Put him in a barking lot.

A pillow.

Fold it.

Change the 'u' to 'a'!

A towel.

Your word

Answers :

One day, Vajradanta, the asura who had taken the form of a mouse calling himself Mooshikasura, went to Vighneswara and began to taunt him. “You’ve big tusks, but what use? You can only eat fruits. Whereas I can even demolish the whole of Kailas.”

Vighneswara kept his cool and did not show any anger. “Yes, what you say is true. If my tusks are of no use, why should I have them at all?” He then pulled out one of his tusks and threw it away. The tusk suddenly assumed power and began hitting Mooshikasura on his face. Blood started oozing from the wounds on his face. Vighneswara thus came to be known as Ekadanta (possessor of one tooth) from that time.

Mooshikasura ran around Vighneswara, pleading that he be relieved of all pain. “O Vighneswara! Your tusk has cured me of my arrogance; the pain it gave me has also given me some wisdom. Now please be kind enough to relieve me of the pain I am suffering.”

Vighneswara thought for a while and said, “I’ve been going about with my paunch all along, and I cannot move fast. I am wondering...”

Before he could complete the sentence, Mooshikasura continued his pleading. “If you will accept me as your mount, I shall feel doubly blessed. I can grow to any size.”

Suddenly, Mooshikasura bloated to the size of

The Story of Ganesa



6. A Vahana for Vighneswara

an elephant. Vighneswara climbed on to the huge mouse, but it shrank to a small size. “You may remain in your original size so that I can easily climb on to you.”

Mooshikasura’s wife, Dhavala, now approached Vighneswara and said, “Let my husband remain as your mount. Please allow me also to serve you.”

Vighneswara turned to Mooshikasura and said, “Your wife Dhavala is a blessed woman. Because of her, you will remain with me as my *vahana*, and you will be happy when you see everybody paying obeisance to me thrice a day.”

“I shall not only be happy but feel gratified,” said Mooshikasura.

Meanwhile, Lord Siva and Parvati fashioned a figure while singing a song in Mohana *raga*. The figure then assumed a brilliance. Agni, the god of Fire, took it to Saravana and dipped it in the lake.

The figure now came alive and was named Kumara, the six headed younger brother of Vighneswara. Kumara went for deep meditation for several days.

He acquired the knowledge of Brahman and came to be called Subrahmanya. He passed on the knowledge and power of *omkara*, the primeval sound, to his father Siva and thus came to be considered a guru of Siva himself. Kumara joined his parents and brother Vighneswara in Kailas. The brothers spent a happy time together.

(To continue)

The sun had just risen on Hollywood on July 30, 1945. Suddenly, two men appeared from behind a bush and intercepted a small van moving down a lonely road. One was tall, lean, and nervous, the other was short, stocky, and calm. At gunpoint, they forced out the two occupants of the vehicle. Blindfolding and gagging them, they tied them to a nearby tree.

Who were these men? What were they up to? They quickly emptied the van of its goods – six bags of silver coins and a cardboard box filled with crisp dollar notes. Then they got into a car parked a little away, and sped into the morning mist.

It was a daring robbery in broad daylight! The van belonged to the Hollywood State Bank. Before long, its two employees managed to free themselves with the help of some passers-by. They were shaken and bewildered. Everything had happened so fast that they just could not defend themselves. They were sad because they had failed in their duty to deliver the money to the Lockheed Company for payment of wages to its workers.

The robbers had committed a serious offence. They were charged with kidnapping and burglary. The case had to be solved as soon as possible if the booty were to be recovered. It was a real challenge for the police and the detective agencies.

Did the bandits leave behind any clues? Scores of people were interviewed; the two messengers of the bank were questioned, too. One of them remembered that, as he was being blindfolded, he had seen a badge on the shirt of the stocky little

robber. It was an emblem of the Lockheed firm. Obviously, the burglar had worn it to show as if he worked there.

One day, a police officer found an abandoned car. Inside the car was a torn piece of paper on which were scribbled a name and address. Soon, policemen traced the address and were knocking on the door of the house. It was opened by a woman who looked surprised to see policemen at her door.

“We’ve come to investigate,” they said politely.

“You’re welcome! Please carry on,” replied the middle-aged lady who was called Mrs. Abelard.

After searching the house, the detectives looked

in the garden where the Abelard children were playing a ball game. Suddenly the ball rolled under the doorway of a shed in the far end of the compound. The children ran behind it. But the door was locked.

“What is in the garage?” asked one of the officers.

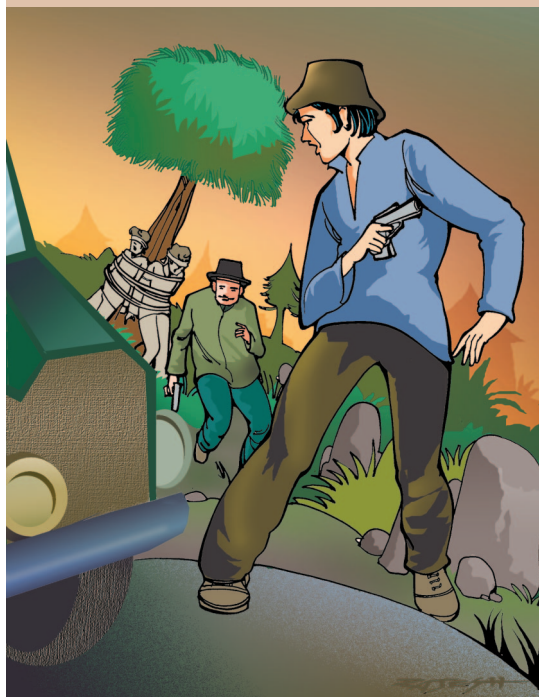
“It has been rented by two young men for the past few weeks,” answered Mrs. Abelard. “But they have not turned up since the last several days.”

The curious policemen broke open the door of the shed. The children were happy to get back their ball. But the detectives were happier. For, in front of them they saw

scattered on the floor a shirt on which was pinned the Lockheed identification badge, an automatic rifle, and revolvers belonging to the two messengers of the bank.

The policemen took the badge to the Lockheed factory. But they discovered that the number on it was a fraud and did not match with the names of the employees. The robbers had cleverly ripped off the original number and written a false number on it with a special pen. But in the scientific laboratory

THE RIDDLE OF EIGHTEEN



under the ultra-violet light, the badge produced some images. They were traces of the original printed digits!

Soon the police were checking the Lockheed plant records of its employees. It was found that the old numbers had been assigned to a tall, lean, and nervous workman called Johnson. It seemed that he had a good friend in Hardy, a stout little chunky fellow of calm temperament. He, too, had been a worker of the company. A breakthrough, at last! The criminals had been identified.

But the burglar friends had quit the company long back. Where could they be now? The police armed with their photographs from the records in the factory one afternoon bumped into Johnson in a small wayside inn. That very evening Hardy was caught lurking near the same hotel. Both were put behind bars despite their pleadings that they were innocent.

When asked about the money, they first pretended to know nothing about it. Later, they said that they would never reveal where it is hidden even if they had to die for it. But one night, the police discovered under the bed of Johnson, a small container filled with water. In it floated an old soggy dollar note.

What could this absurd experiment mean? Was it a clue to the secret of the money? Perhaps the booty was hidden in a very damp place. So the accused wanted to find out how long it would take for a currency note to rot!

The robber friends were lodged in solitary cells. But they frequently exchanged cryptic notes between themselves with the help of a guard. Somehow detective agents got hold of most of these messages.

Some of these notes referred to the figure

“18” and the word “paper”. One read: “If we are confined for a long period, then the winter rains will rot the paper.” Another said: “My young sister can gather them. But how on earth can she reach the...”

Did the word “paper” mean money? If yes, then it was hidden in a very damp place beyond the reach of a young girl. But what did the figure “18” stand for? Was it the number given to identify some road?

The police and the detective agents were soon exploring a road marked with a stone on which was written the number “18”. They noticed a narrow pathway which led to a wire fence about ten feet high that ran round an old cemetery.

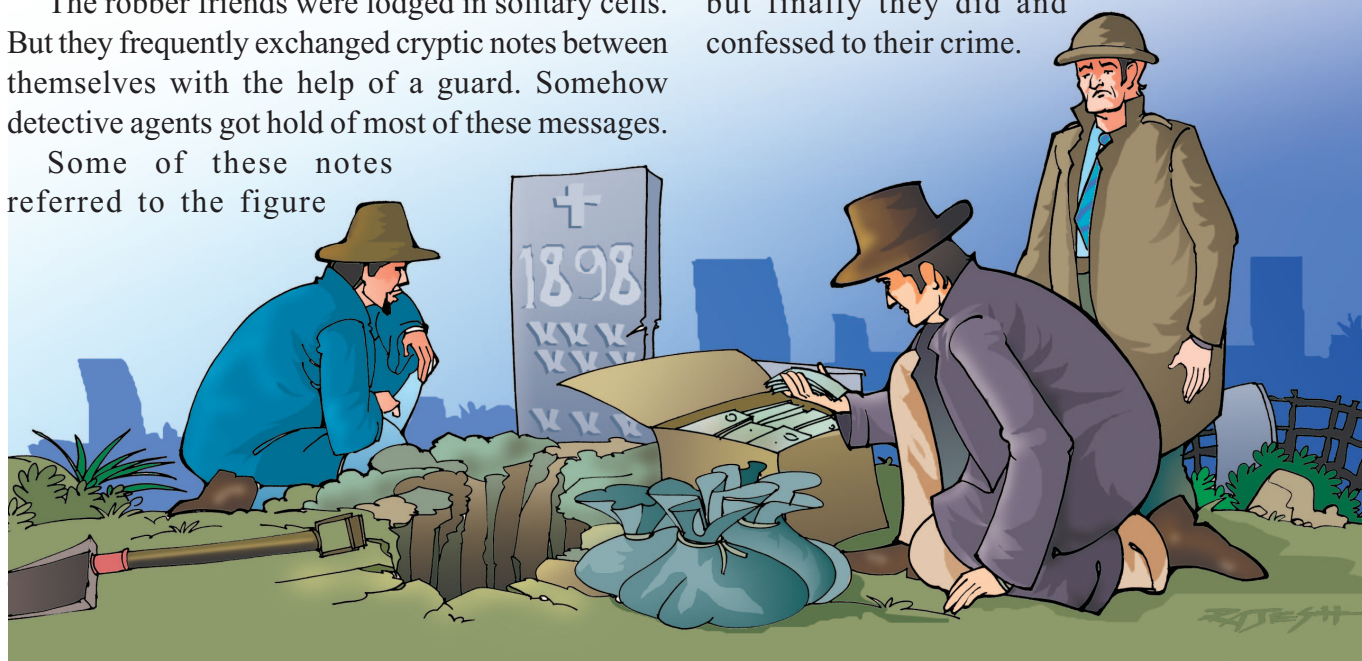
One of the officers exclaimed, “Indeed, a gravestone is a landmark easy to remember!”

“You’re right! A young girl would have a hard time getting over that high fence!” remarked another.

The pieces of the puzzle were now beginning to fall into place. The officers lost no time and painstakingly began to move along the endless rows of graves. They were looking for some telltale mark and they stumbled upon one. For behind the tombstone of a soldier, who had died in the year 1898, was a mound of earth, twigs, and leaves!

They had the spot dug out. Deep in the crevice and under the tombstone securely rested the stolen money – six bags of silver pieces and a cardboard box filled with crisp currency notes!

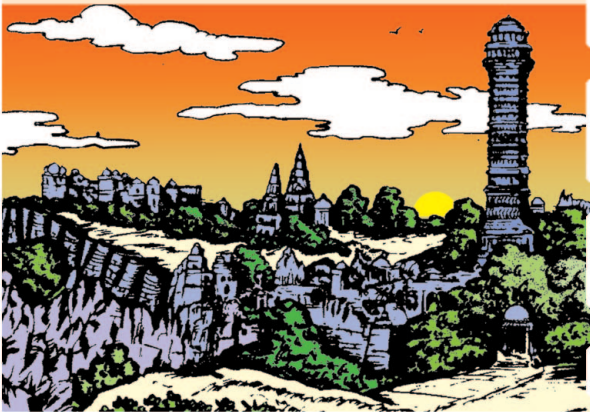
The two friends in the prison were informed of this great discovery. First they refused to believe, but finally they did and confessed to their crime.



Women who made history

The Rani of Chitor

In the 13th century, Mewar ruled by the Ranas was a prosperous kingdom in Rajputana. The capital Chitor was a fortification built on a hill. It was safe and strong.



Rana Ratan Singh was its ruler, when the Sultan of Delhi, Alauddin Khalji, was extending his sway. Rani Padmini's beauty was even then a topic of conversation in princely houses.



The Sultan was already planning to march into Mewar. He was keen to see Rani Padmini, about whose beauty he often heard from the dancing girls in his palace.

Alauddin led his army towards Chitor, which he wanted to take by surprise. He assumed that the Rana would not have had time to prepare for an effective defence.

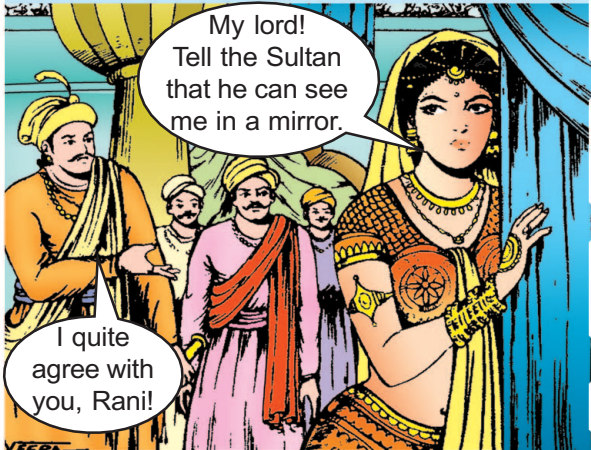


The Sultan's calculations went wrong. He was surprised at the stiff resistance offered by the Rana's soldiers. Alauddin was forced to retreat.

The crafty Sultan re-grouped his soldiers and surrounded the hill, blocking all routes to and from the fort. He hoped the Rana would surrender once the food supply was cut. Months passed.



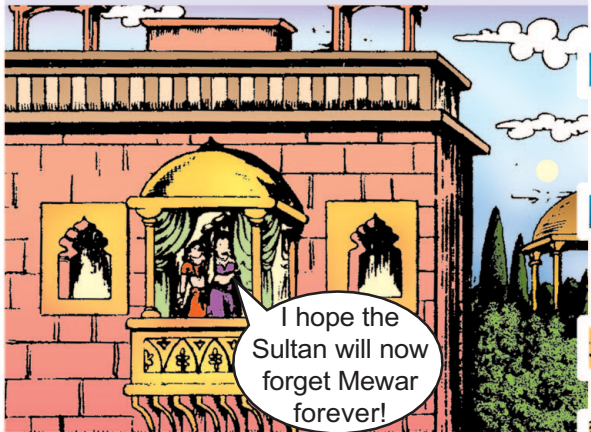
The Sultan sent a message to the Rana that he was returning to Delhi and that before he went away, he would like to have a glimpse of Rani Padmini, about whose beauty he had heard a lot.



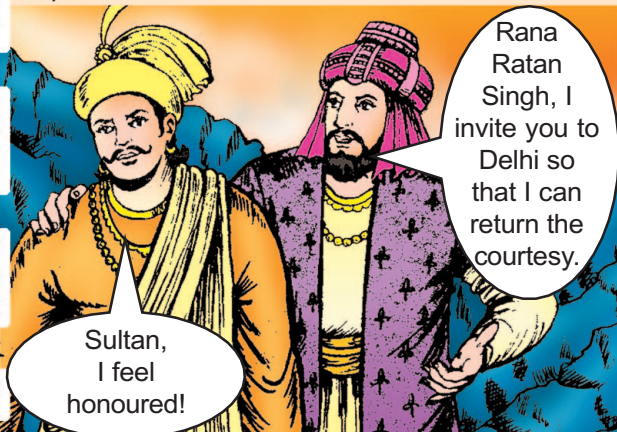
The Sultan was courteously received in the fort and taken to a room where a large mirror hung on the wall facing a large window.



The mirror had reflected the Rani's image as she stood gazing at the lake from the balcony. Alauddin could see her image only for a fleeting moment.



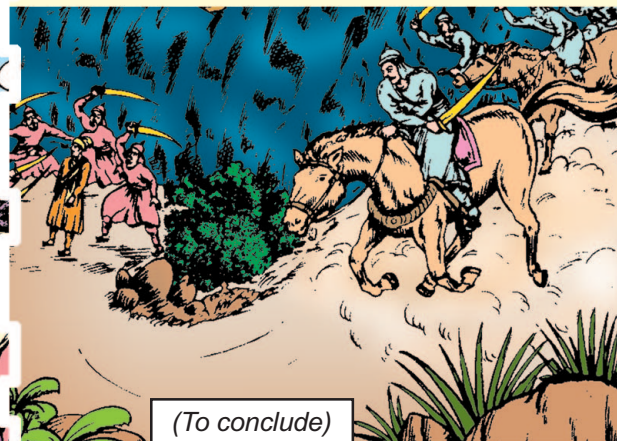
As per the Rajput custom, the Rana escorted Alauddin to the gateway, alone. The Sultan had placed his hands on the Rana as they were descending the steps. The Rana listened to words of praise from the Sultan.



The Sultan's soldiers, who were waiting at the foothills, suddenly sprang on the Rana and took him unawares.



The Rajput soldiers rushed out to rescue their Rana, but it was too late. They were warned that the Rana would be put to death if they were to advance further.



World Cup comes to India

The World Cup Football — the once-in-four years sports spectacle — will be played this year in Japan and South Korea from May 31. The countries where it will be held four and eight years later have already been chosen, while there will be bidding by countries in good time for holding the World Cup in the years that follow. When you read the title above, did you assume that FIFA, the world body who looks after the fixtures, has chosen India to stage the World Cup? Recently, the newspapers did carry a report that India was seriously thinking of bidding for the Olympic Games! It may be remembered that India had hosted the First Asian Games in 1951 and a second time in 1982.

Let us go back to football. The real 'World Cup', which will be given away to the winning team after the Final is fought in Japan on June 30, was brought to India in April when football players and fans in Kolkata, Delhi, Kochi, and Mumbai got a rare opportunity to take a glimpse of it. The Cup was on what was described as a 'trophy tour' all over the world,



like the Olympic Torch which is lit at Olympia in Greece, where the ancient games were once held, and taken in relay through almost all the countries of the world before it reaches the venue of the Games where the Olympic flame is lit to mark the start of the Games.

The 'trophy tour' was sponsored by Gillette, the manufacturers of the famous brand of razor blades. The Cup reached Delhi on April 25; it was on display in Kolkata the next day, and after a visit to Dhaka in Bangladesh, it was taken to Kochi on April 29, and shown in Mumbai the next day. At each of these places, a national player was invited to unveil the Cup and permitted to plant a kiss, just as the captain of the winning team would do the moment the Cup is presented to him.

Football, probably, is the most popular of all games, and the motive of the sponsors in taking the Cup from one country to another is to recruit more lovers for the game and to inspire all those who actually play and are already members of the national teams. It appears, in Yokohama, in central Japan,

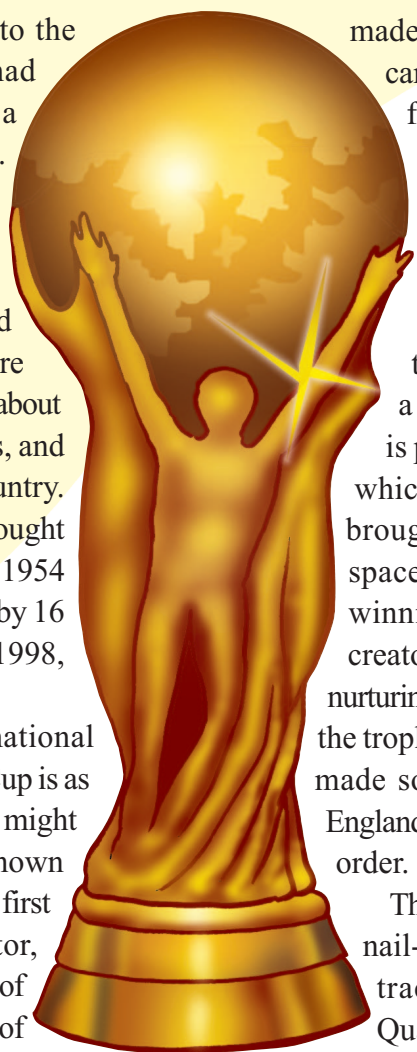
where the Cup was first presented to the public, more than 45,000 persons had assembled at the stadium to take a glimpse of the most coveted sports Cup.

For more than a year, teams from 198 countries battled to qualify for a place among the 32 finalists who would play the World Cup fixtures in Japan and South Korea. Among these nations were Anguilla, which has a population of just about 10,000 and only 75 registered players, and China, the world's most populous country. Compare this with the 13 teams who fought for the first World Cup in 1930. From 1954 to 1978 the final fixtures were played by 16 teams; this number rose to 24 and in 1998, the maximum of 32 was reached.

The history of the FIFA (International Federation of Football Associations) Cup is as exciting as any of the matches that you might be watching on the TV. It was once known as the Jules Rimet Cup, named after the first President of FIFA. A French sculptor, Abel Lafleur, was given the assignment of designing a trophy. He made the figure of a winged woman holding an octagonal cup in her hands outstretched above her head. The base was filled with semi-precious stones.

During World War II, no tournament could be held. It appears, the FIFA Vice-President Barassi safely hid the cup in a shoebox and kept it beneath his bed! It was brought out for the fourth World Cup (after 1930, 1934, and 1938) which was held only in 1950. In 1966, the Cup was stolen when it was on display in London! Fortunately, it was recovered within a week by a mongrel dog named Pickles!

When Brazil became winners successively in 1962, 1966, and 1970, the Cup went into the permanent possession of that country, according to the Rules. So, a new trophy had to be made. This time, the Italian sculptor Silvio Gazzaniga was entrusted with the job. We are told that he shut himself up in his studio for a whole week to prepare the design. When the Cup was



made, it stood 36 cm high. It is made of 18 carat gold and weighs 4.97 kg. It has the figures of two athletes standing back to back with arms outstretched and a globe resting on their shoulders. It was decided that the Cup would remain in the possession of the FIFA except for the actual presentation ceremony, while the winning team would carry home only a gold-plated replica, which the country is permitted to keep. It is such a replica which was taken on the 'trophy tour' and brought to India. The base of the Cup has space enough to engrave the names of 17 winning nations, upto the year 2038. The creator of the Cup, an ageing Gazzaniga, is nurturing the hope that his country Italy will win the trophy at least this year. From all analysis made so far by experts, the favourites are England, Argentina, and Italy, though not in that order.

The next one month will sure witness some nail-biting matches. Just to help you keep track of the important matches, the Quarter-finals will be played on June 21 (2 matches) and June 22 (2 matches); the semi-finals on June 25 and 26, while the fight for the 3rd place will come off on June 29. And then, the Final on June 30! By the way, have you reserved a ringside seat in front of your TV?

A Referee from India

Mr. Komaleeswaran Shankar of Chennai will be the lone official representative from India at this year's World Cup. It is the first time that an Indian finds a place in the panel of referees appointed by the FIFA. It is not yet known in which match he will officiate. He has only been told that it will be one of the fixtures in Japan.

NEWS FLASH

You're ditched!

We in India are familiar with the exercise undertaken by our civic bodies very often by changing the names of streets. Fortunately, such changes are, in a majority of cases, confined



to the names of well-known personalities. That, of course, is an easy way to remember them and their service to the nation. Now, if one were to go to England and visit South Cambridgeshire, one would come across a street name that would delight Harry Potter fans—Quidditch Lane. Isn't that the high-speed game that is mentioned in Harry Potter books? "No, sir," some resident would tell you. It's actually an old English word meaning 'dry ditch'.

An Indian record



Manchester was once the industrial capital of England, famous for its textile and rubber mills, and factories making chemicals. Now one can add pickles also in the list. An Indian-owned pickles factory started by the Pathak Group is considered the largest in the world. If one can imagine six football grounds put one next to the other, well, that is the area where the pickles factory has come up. The Pathak family, fifty years ago, was making *samosas* at home and selling them. And today, they are hot names in the pickles market!

Pet or pest?

Sure, it's a pet for the Koops family in Kelowna, British Columbia; but the Child Welfare Department thinks it is a pest and may pose a hazard. Here, 'it' refers to Boaz, a 5m (16.5 ft) long python which has been living with the family, including nine children, the youngest aged just two years, for five years now. The authorities, however, fear for the children's safety. Either Boaz goes out or the children stay elsewhere, they say. But Koop Sr. assures them that Boaz is friendly, and very often school children are brought to their home and they handle the python without fear.



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Where red means slow!

❁ **Reader Malavika Shunglu of Srinagar wants to know the significance of the expression 'red tape'.**

In the 17th century England, official papers and documents used to be tied with a red ribbon to denote that they belong to the government. Today, the papers kept in neat files are sent to the officials one after the other for study, discussion, and decision or disposal. Naturally, the files move from one table to another. Sometimes it takes a long time before the matter mentioned in the papers is decided upon or disposed. Nowadays, such delays are ascribed to the 'red tape' which stands for officialdom. Though a red tape was in common use, the expression as such was first made by Charles Dickens (1812-70) and Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). In India, the tapes have generally given place to broad red flaps.

❁ **What is meant by 'chops and changes'? asks reader Jyotiranjana Biswal of Durgapur.**

The correct expression is 'to chop and change', which means to change one's mind, opinions, plans, and wishes too often. Suppose, somebody books a ticket on a flight and changes his travel plans and books a ticket on another flight and again cancels his trip and buys a ticket for another flight, he is only chopping and changing, much to the chagrin of the travel agent!

❁ **When the word 'number' is abbreviated, it is written as 'No.' whereas the letter 'o' does not occur in number. How is it so? asks Mathew Parakkal, Kottayam.**

The abbreviation No. comes from the Latin word 'numero', meaning number.



★ **Why don't we see stars during the day?**

- Radha Raman, Kanpur

There is a layer of air surrounding the earth. As it is transparent, it absorbs light from the sun during the day, and it acquires a bluish colour. That is how the sky appears blue. However, this light from the sun is brighter than the light from the stars, which then are not visible. When it gets dark after sunset, when the sky, too, is dark, the light from the stars reappears.

★ **Trees on the sea coast often grow at an angle. Why?**

- Pratap Jajodia, Gwalior

The saplings on the sea coast get hit by the strong winds blowing from the sea. Being young and still growing, they acquire a bend, which makes them lean towards the sea. When the trees mature, the trunks harden at the angle, and remain like that.

★ **When were safety matches invented? Why are they so called?**

- K.S. Ranganayagi, Sivakasi

A time came when matchsticks had to be made safe because, white phosphorus used in matches was found to be a poisonous substance, endangering the health of the workers employed in the manufacturing process. Towards the middle of the 19th century, an Austrian chemist, Anton von Schrotter, discovered red phosphorus, which is not poisonous and does not ignite by itself. About a decade later, Johan Edvard Lundstrom of Sweden invented the safety match, with potassium chlorate on the matchhead, and red phosphorus on the striking surface. The matchstick became 'safe' in two ways — non-poisonous and not self-igniting.

This may interest you

Smith is a popular name in England and Wales. If everybody with that name is invited to a football match at the Wembley, there will be enough Smiths to fill the stadium!

Know Your India

Quiz

In school, you are taught both the history of India and its geography. Probably you remember much of the history, especially what you heard as stories. This month's quiz might help you recall what you learnt of its geography and something more, but connected with geography. Here we go!

1. A hill range in the northeast has a name which literally means 'abode of serpents'. What is the name?
2. In which river is the island of Srirangapatnam located?
3. Point Palmyras in Orissa is on the mouth of a river. Which river?
4. Which State has the largest inland waterways?
5. Which village in the Spiti valley is generally considered as the world's highest village? How high is it?
6. Into which lake in Kerala do the rivers Pamba, Periyar, and Marimala drain?
7. Which town in Maharashtra is the highest hill station in the Western ghats?
8. On which river is India's highest waterfall, the Jog?
9. The fort in Bundi has an artificial lake in which lies a half-submerged temple dedicated to Varuna. What is the name of the lake?
10. The Vindhya have lent their name to a Rajput clan in Madhya Pradesh. What is the name of the tribe?

(Answers next month)

Answers to May Quiz

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Bahamini, Sultan | Mumbai) |
| Alaud-din, 1347 | 5. Delhi |
| 2. The Ten Degree | 6. Calcutta (now |
| Channel - between | Kolkata) |
| the Andaman and | 7. Madurai - the |
| Nicobar islands | Vaigai river |
| 3. Cuttack | 8. The Pamban |
| 4. Bombay (now | Straits |



By e-mail from **Sudhi Dey:**

I lived abroad since I was born in 1993; I am now residing in Kolkata since 2001. I enjoy reading the stories by Ruskin Bond; I also enjoy Garuda the Invincible, the Story of Ganesa, and Stories from other lands. I visited your website and found it interesting. Thank you for bringing out such a nice publication for us - children.

From reader **C. Narasimham, Hyderabad:**

I was glad to see *Chandamama* in its new format, though I was expecting to see something like the *Reader's Digest*, so that it may be handy and can be preserved in the home library. Please consider the possibility. Whatever it is, as an avid reader, I would be looking forward to seeing *Chandamama* in all its splendour.



Reader **Prerana Mattoo** writes from **Jammu:**

Chandamama has helped me gain knowledge and improve my vocabulary. Please add some riddles, puzzles, and tit-bits to refresh the dull and drab mind. I read the magazine not only for fun and amusement but to increase my word power. I like its colourful get-up very much. *Chandamama* is a real source of knowledge for the growing generation.

In honour of the power within

There's no second opinion that children often exhibit acts of valour under very trying circumstances. The annual National Bravery Awards are only too well known. The Binani Trust formed by the Binani Industries Ltd., Mumbai, instituted the Ghanshyam Binani Children's Bravery Award last year. The late Shri Ghanshyam Binani, according to a mailer, "loved children and loved reading *Chandamama* even more". Nominations for the 2nd Award for the year 2001-2002 have been invited. The Award, meant for children below 14 years, consists of a medal, citation, certificate, and a cash reward of Rs.51,000. Details can be had from Ms. Bina Verma of Binani Industries Ltd., Mercantile Chambers, 12 J.N. Heredia Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai - 400 001.



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Printed and Published by B. Viswanatha Reddi at B.N.K. Press Pvt.
Ltd., Chennai - 600 026 on behalf of Chandamama India Limited
No. 82 Defence Officers Colony, Ekkatuthangal
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